Entertainment
Rio's last words to her son

News/A2
GMA leaves for EU-Asean summit in Vietnam

Metro/A20
Marikina starts door-to-door population campaign

Business/B6
World oil prices soar to $51 per barrel

Sports
One more year with La Salle for Mac Cardona

Inquirer In-Depth
Paano umiwas ng 5-6? Tip para sa mga sutang
Ngayong 10:30 ng gabi, sa ABC

Court orders BIR to refund Lucio Tan P1.036 billion

By Philip C. Tubeza

THE GOVERNMENT has suffered a major blow in its tax collection efforts after it lost a P1.036-billion tax case against Chinese-Filipino businessman Lucio Tan at the Court of Appeals.

The case is different from the P33-billion

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Thursday, October 7, 2004 • 32 pages | vol. 19 | no. 301

website: www.inq7.net

Man finds perfect wife after marrying 53 times

KUALA LUMPUR—In what is touted as a national record, a 52-year-old Malaysian Muslim first tied the knot 47 years ago, and tied it again and again 53 times. This week, he announced where he

₱1,200 subsidy for poor planned

Program to cost gov't P6 billion a month

By Juliet Labog-Javellana and Blanche S. Rivera

THE GOVERNMENT is considering giving one food coupon worth a "minimum" of P1,200 monthly to some five million families nationwide before the end of October—for a tab of P6 billion a month.

The 10 poorest families in every barangay—now being identified by the Department of Social Welfare and Development with the help of local government units—will be the beneficiaries of the "intensified food voucher system," Social Welfare Undersecretary Celia Yangco said yesterday at a press briefing in Malacañang.

She said the National Anti-Poverty Commission and the DSWD were now discussing how to "intensify" the planned food assistance in light of the recent Social Weather Stations survey, which said the incidence of hunger among Filipino food stays, while one in every seven families having had nothing to eat once or twice in the past three months.

From the Catholic Church, on which people usually turn for hope, were only darker days ahead for the poor.

"This is bad. Since the government starts giving out food coupons, it means there is a crisis in food ... It is an acknowledgment of the fact that many Filipinos are really poor," Cotabato Bishop Dinualdo Gutierrez told reporters as the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines media office in Manila.

"If the government does not take dramatic measures, this will become an economic crisis and turn into a humanitarian crisis," he said.

Bilgrave, who chairs the CBCP public affairs commission, said the planned food coupon system would only reinforce the feeling of poverty.

"It's very, very difficult for us [to give hope] because the state of poverty seems to be getting far too wide and deep that even immediate measures to address it seem futile," he said.

Bilgrave urged the government to get to the root causes of poverty instead of stopping at "palliatives."

"[Government officials] are not that kind of idiots. They are what the real problem is," he said.

He pointed out that the government should not feel that its food coupons, similar to the feeding programs of parishes and nongovernmental organizations, were enough to solve the problem.

Bilgrave said graft and corruption were a main cause of poverty, citing a study saying that 60 percent of government revenues were lost to corruption.

He also said the government should spend more for social services instead of debt services, which he said was one of the "evils."

"Corruption continues. It is getting worse. That is why ... economic evil has grown to this [magnitude of] poverty," he said.

Bilgrave said the government should provide alternatives like a livelihood program, or that the poor would not develop the dole-out mentality.

But he also called on all Catholics to help solve the poverty problem in any way they could.

"Help should come from the Church as a

SPARKLE, a ruby-cheeked and world-wide "idol" of her generation, Filipino-Jasmine Trias arrives here on Wednesday for her first visit to her parents' homeland. On Oct. 16, she performs at the Araneta Coliseum where she's expected to display the personality and the voice that propelled her to the final rap three of the wildly popular "American Idol" talent search in the US.

Dayrit to critics: It's the economy, not population

By Martin P. Misalucha and Blanche S. Rivera

HEALTH Secretary Manuel Dayrit does not believe overpopulation is a root cause by running the hunger line by stuffing Filipino households. The problem is "economics," he said on Tuesday night, as though the two problems were not related.

"It's simplistic to say (there is hunger because of overpopulation)," Dayrit told reporters. "Many do not have jobs, or (there's not) enough economic activity, so there's not enough food."

Dayrit was speaking at the launch of the private sector's "Leaders for Health," a program that brings government executives, community leaders, and mayors for community health activities.

Earlier that day, Sen. Jinggoy Estrada said a fiscal Pandora Tsunami survey that showed 15.1 percent of Filipino households had nothing to eat at least once in the last three months highlighted the problem of population growth.

Dayrit countered, "There are countries

Fil-Am 'Idol' rouses 'Jasmania' in Manila

By Marinel R. Cruz

BELIEVE it or not, Jasmine Trias has put "American Idol" behind her.

The diminutive Fil-Am singer, who becomes a worldwide celebrity via the wildly popular singing competition in the United States, said so several times yesterday upon arrival in Manila for her first-ever visit to the land of her parents' birth.

She wasn't wearing her trademark flower behind the ear.

"I forget about the show already."

"I really don't think about the show anymore."

"I've moved on."

Trias, 17, arrived at 1:35 p.m. in a roaring welcome from fans and media scuffling at the airport to get a glimpse of her. Trias, "Jasmania" in Manila officially started.

She had come straight from Singapore, the last leg of the A2 2004's post-competition 30-city tour.

Born and raised in Hawaii,

Colonel probed over ₱50-M fortune

By Ed Zamora

EVEN the former budget officer of the ground found it hard to quarrel unexplained wealth has an estimated P50-million fortune in real estate, vehicles and cash deposits, according to documents submitted to the office of the Armed Forces' Ombudsman.

The documents identified the officer as Lt. Col. George Rabusa, former chief of the budget division in the Office of the AFP Comptroller (but Maj. Gen. Carlos Garcia formerly headed).

A lawyer at the AFP Ombudsman confirmed that Rabusa was investigated in connection with a graft complaint filed in 2002. The lawyer said the case against Rabusa was set aside but because of "legal technicalities" but would be revived "anytime now."

The documents showed that Rabusa had a P10-million savings deposit with the AFP Savings and Loan Association Inc., known in his area, Manila, as Ferrer Savings Bank, and at the AFP Officers' Village Association Incorporated (AFPOVAI) in Fort Bonifacio, Makati; and seven vehicles registered under his name, his wife Ofelia's name, and those of other relatives.

Rabusa, however, had a gross monthly income of only P66,639.00. With deductions, he only received about P5,000, according to his pay slips that were submitted to the Ombudsman.

Incurring no his service record, Rabusa was assigned to Jolo on Nov. 9, 1999. He was relieved from Jolo in 2002 and assigned commander of the 42nd Infantry Battalion in Bataan in the same year.

He is currently chief of operations of the Central Command based in Cebu City.

In 1987, Rabusa filed a tax return

Blind Baguio kids see bright future in music

By Rabbit Pinoda
PhilStar Northern Luzon Bureau

BAGUIO CITY—They are blind, but they can see the future. They will learn to read and write and play musical instruments; they will form a versatile band and perform in a big hall to raise funds with which they can help other blind children.

Yes, they are children, less, aged 8 to 14. All 16 of them are wards of the Northern Luzon Association for the Blind and come from poor families. But just as they are confident by their disability, they are determined not to let poverty keep them away from their dream.

So when the story got the piano, guitars and tambourine Timor Children's Home, a Bank saving campaign group that calls on individuals and companies to donate the equivalent of one bowl of their earnings to support programs for needy Filipino children.

Playing Santa Claus to 16,463 12 weeks before Christmas, Children's Hour turned over P20,000 on Friday, first day of the nationwide Children's Month celebration. The whole

Palace mad at Piatco: Are they hiding something?

WHAT are they hiding inside the cavernous, world-class interiors of Nido 3? The Palace is puzzled why its top officials were denied entry on Tuesday. Mothballed for more than a year and a half, the airport terminal is reported to be fully operational.

By Gil C. Cabunoy Jr., Christine O. Avendaño and Clarissa S. Batino

THE COUNTRY'S sovereignty was submitted talent. Philippine International Air Terminals Co. (Piatco) turned away a six-member government team set to inspect the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (Nia) Terminal 3 on Tuesday, Malacañang said yesterday.

"We will not allow anybody to subvert the sovereignty of the Philippines," Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said at a briefing.

Under the country's laws, the Manila International Airport Authority (MIAA) has oversight power over all airport-related facilities, said Bunye, who was part of the government team that Piatco denied entry to Nido 3.

Other members of the team included Environment Secretary Eduardo Ermita, Transportation Secretary Leandro Mendoza and MIAA General Manager Alfonso Cusi.

Bunye said President Macapagal-Arroyo was very "disappointed" by Piatco's decision to "unreasonably" bar her men from inspecting the Nia passenger terminal.

He said that Mrs Arroyo was keen on opening Nido 3 and that she was expecting all operations—legal, diplomatic and economic.

"They must be hiding something that they don't want us to see," Bunye said, referring to

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 7, 2004

WEATHER FORECAST

Second FRONT PAGE

GMA heads for Vietnam for summit

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo flies to Vietnam this morning to join 20 other leaders from the European Union and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations in the fifth Asia-Europe Meeting.

"This is a powerhouse summit where East meets West in an economic partnership that has been driven (ahead) over the years," Ms Arroyo said of her three-day trip to Hanoi.

She is scheduled to leave on a 9:10 a.m. Philippine Airlines flight. Her key delegation includes Executive Secretary Ronaldo Zamora, Trade Secretary Cesar Purisima (trade) and Ignacio Bunye (press), Philippine Ambassador to Vietnam Hermenegildo Lenon and Foreign Undersecretary Susan Brady. First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo is not scheduled for the trip.

Bunye said the landmark meets 5 summit will bring together for the first time the 25-member countries of the EU, the 10 Asean members that include the Philippines, and Asean's three partners, China, Japan and South Korea.

Bunye said the President's attendance in the Asem, held every two years, would be an occasion to promote cooperation with the EU in the fields of trade, tourism, securing environment protection and international migration.

The meeting EU was the country's third largest export market absorbing 16.6 percent of exports.

'TOKEN SURRENDER'

Abra gov, 11 mayors give up 23 firearms

By Christian V. Esguerra

ELEVEN mayors of Abra as well as the provincial governor have turned over firearms to authorities in what the Philippine National Police termed a "token surrender."

The 23 pistols and high-powered guns they turned over to Task Force Abra on Tuesday were nowhere near the number expected to be collected by Friday, the deadline set by PNP Director General Edgardo Aglipay but the cache brought to 35 the number of loose firearms that three policemen have surrendered to the PNP in compliance with an campaign to dismantle all private armies there.

"We believe there are many more loose firearms out there. It sure is a token surrender," Senior Supt. Leopoldo Bataoil, PNP spokesperson, told the inquirer.

He said the PNP would now apply the warrants for the planned searches and raids to be conducted by the task force.

Gov. Vicente Valera initiated the token surrender, turning over a total of eight Garand rifles, two M-16 rifles, a baby Armalite, an FN rifle, a 22-gauge shotgun and three pistols.

The mayors who followed the governor's lead were Cecilia Luna, Tomas Bersoza, Inocencio Tumaru-ay, Madlod Medina, Roland Somera, Theodore Bersa, Jaciadio Bisonte, Lisardo Elnaje Jr., Rodolfo Bernardez, Rogelio Flores, and Michel Tiscareno.

According to a PNP report shown the reporters before the May elections, one of the mayors maintained a private army believed responsible for the killing of at least ten political rivals.

Divers reveal over the biggest seizure of undeclared firearms—two 12-gauge shotguns, two .38-cal. revolvers, and a .45-cal. pistol. Medina surrendered only a Garand rifle.

Besides the task force headed by Chief Supt. Rodolfo Mendoza, Bureau of Customs Administrator Angelo Lastimoso and 30 Bureau, including an 18-200 [illegible] grenade launcher. It also seized 34 vehicles with no license plates.

Aglipay had ordered the dismantling of private armies in Abra in response to an incessant report on the resurging crime situation there.

He immediately rescinded the firearm permits of all Abra residents and sacked at least 61 policemen monkfighting as bodyguards for politicians.

Abra is now under the watch of the Special Police Force, the elite anti-riot forces, 400-insurgency and special reaction unit of the PNP.

NALZA

Erap defense self-destructing, says prosecutor

THE GOVERNMENT's chief prosecutor in the plunder trial of ousted President Joseph Estrada yesterday declared that Estrada's defense was "self-destructing" as a fourth-day witness yesterday failed to challenge the credibility of the state's star witness, Bureau of Customs (BOC) Director Jacinto Ligot.

Special Prosecutor Dennis Villa-Ignacio said he did not need to demolish Estrada's defense as the defense lawyers were already doing it for him.

On cross-examination by Villa-Ignacio, Efraim Tejada, a former state auditor of the Commission on Audit, admitted that she had no direct knowledge of the veracity of the COA reports showing Ligtas to have hundreds of millions of pesos in allegedly unliquidated cash advances.

Tejada also admitted that the annual audit reports for 1999, 2000, and 2001 of Ligtas bar showed the protected property owned under Ligtas in how "consistently" initiated efforts to comply with COA rules.

The defense lawyers had presented the audit reports as showing that Ligtas, while still governor, had accumulated "unsettled cash advances" running into several million pesos over several years.

Ligtas, a longtime friend and associate of Estrada, precipitated the impeachment and eventual ouster of Estrada when he denounced the disgraced leader as having allegedly accepted illegal gambling bribes and stolen government funds.

Asked why in spite of the allegedly negative findings that Ligtas had committed officials, the COA did not recommend their prosecution, Peña replied: "I don't know because I was not the one who prepared the report."

She gave the same answer concerning the 1999, 2000 and 2001 annual audit reports that lead defense counsel Rene Saguisag earlier said showed Ligtas to have allegedly committed financial irregularities.

Coming to Peña's defense, defense counsel Raymund Fortun said Peña "would not have [the] competence" to answer Villa-Ignacio's questions because she was not the "team leader" of the group that prepared the COA reports.

There was an audible snooze in the courtroom as Fortun appeared to have played into the arguments of the prosecution that Peña had no knowledge about the veracity of the audit reports as she merely "tallied" the text and reviewed the "computation," Armand H. Nocum

VISIT THE COUNTRY'S MOST COMPREHENSIVE 5-IN-1 MACHINERY AND TECHNOLOGY SHOWCASE!

FREE admission

Enviro-tech PHILIPPINES 2004

METAL Philippines'04

WOODMACH PHILIPPINES 2004

PhilTRONICS

Pack Print Plas Philippines

Chavit: No regrets, no pity for Erap

By Armand N. Nocum

ILIGOAN Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson said he has no regrets pinning his former ruling pal, ex-President Joseph Estrada, to stone, bar—or, to be more accurate, in four-house arrest.

"Pity him? Why should I? He lives like a king," Singson said of his former buddy who is detained in a 15-hectare vacation estate in Tanay, Rizal.

Estrada, 67, faces plunder and perjury charges. He was ousted more than three years ago amid charges of allegedly amassing P4.1 billion in ill-gotten wealth.

About P1.0 million of this amount reportedly came from kickbacks from the tobacco excise tax.

It was Singson who blew the whistle on Estrada's cronyism from tobacco and "jueteng" (an illegal numbers game) which triggered the failed impeachment proceedings against the former President.

Estrada was eventually ousted in January 2001 and was arrested three months later.

In a hotel-suite press briefing with handpicked Ilocos reporters, Singson admitted that he missed his friend, whom he first met 40 years ago when Estrada was an actor and a producer.

"I miss playing mahjong with him," Singson confessed when asked what he missed most about his ex-buddy.

Singson was allegedly a member of Estrada's "midnight Cabinet," a select group of friends who played mahjong, womanized and got drunk with the former leader from evening till dawn.

When told that friends claimed to have "story sa life" while in detention, Singson, known to have the same passion for women as the ex-President, exclaimed: "That's impossible!"

Singson said he was not ruling out a possible reconciliation with Estrada.

"I have no problem with that. I don't feel guilty because I only went against him when he betrayed me," Singson said.

Asked if he was still involved in jueteng, which protests long after the ouster of President Estrada, Singson said he was "totally out of it. Mayroong machine (It's machine). I have other problems to deal with," he said.

He said he favored jueteng's legalization only if the government had done everything it could to stop it.

He denied having any knowledge of big-time jueteng operations or their police and government protectors that Ilocanos-Dagupan Archbishop Oscar Cruz plans to name publicly.

"Archbishop Cruz must be sure about his evidence against those jueteng lords," said Singson, who allegedly is the biggest of them all.

BIR to go after cell phone sellers

By Gil Cabacungan Jr. and Michelle Remo

UNDER pressure to raise revenue collections in the face of a fiscal crisis, the Bureau of Internal Revenue is training its guns on the P300-billion-a-year telecommunications industry to intensify its enforcement campaign to go after big-time tax evaders.

"The biggest leakage in the revenue collections are coming from the telecommunications industry," said BIR Commissioner Guillermo Parayno Jr.

He said the BIR is targeting cell phone dealers and retailers who have billions of pesos worth of unpaid taxes for past years.

He said mobile phone providers Smart and Globe helped the agency come up with a short list of these firms.

Short list

"The mobile phone firms helped us track down the sales of handsets and cell cards which enabled us to make an estimate of how much their dealers and resellers made in the past five years. We are still coordinating with the DOJ (Department of Justice) on how to proceed with our tax evasion cases," Parayno said.

Parayno said one of the firms being eyed for back taxes was Cellmage, owned by Jimmy Gow and Eric the Matsunaga, which allegedly has 194 billion in undeclared income.

Parayno said the BIR has the names of almost a dozen other cell phone dealers and retailers that have undeclared income comparable to that of Cellmage.

The majority of cell phone users in the country are prepaid subscribers who buy their cell minutes either through cards or electronic loads for as little 25.

The BIR has reconstituted the Task Force on Tax Evasion Cases and has moved to ties with the Monetary Board to speed up the drive for more than 300 tax-dodging individuals and companies.

Yesterday, the BIR filed tax evasion cases against nine companies located in the Cabalacuan region.

Leading the pack is the Batangas-Laguna Tayabas Bus Co. which was charged for 1991 .3 million worth of unpaid taxes.

The others were: Silver City Trading Corp., Precon Technologies Inc., Cubri Construction & Industrial Corp., El Green Food Services International, Armored Knitting, Homeowners Photocenter, MC Olive Enterprises, and St. Peter Security and General Services.

The BIR also charged two individuals, Marilena Mercado and Susan Pagod-Serapio.

Parayno, who led the filing of the charges yesterday at the Bohan Kiosk's office, said the BIR was able to address the tax controversy through the use of its recently adopted computerized auditing system called Audit Reconciliation of Listings for Enforcement.

Under this system, the BIR checks the sales and income declarations of taxpayers against the amount of purchases declared by their clients.

"At the outset, our position was very clear: we will run after tax dodgers and we will pursue this to the very end. Let no one mislead themselves as to how the technology to monitor this," said Parayno in a statement.

The BIR said five of the seven companies were found to have grossly underdeclared or not to have declared at all their value-added tax obligations.

Delinquent taxpayers

The two remaining companies and two individuals were delinquent taxpayers who failed to respond to the agency's notice of letters and assessments for them to settle their tax liabilities. Charges filed based on the BIR's final assessment are criminal in nature.

Once the head's office finds probable cause, the charges will be brought to the Court of Tax Appeals.

The respondents face heavy fines and imprisonment in addition to the claims of their businesses, the BIR said.

Since the BIR adopted the new auditing methodology, it was able to detect discrepancies in income and tax liability declarations, especially of corporate taxpayers.

The BIR earlier filed similar charges against several companies, most of which were dealers of telecommunications products.

Solon says GMA now part of GSIS problem

BY REFUSING to let go of Winston Garcia, the controversial president and general manager of the Government Service Insurance System, President Macapagal-Arroyo has become as much of a problem for the GSIS as Garcia, spokesman of the group representative claimed yesterday.

Antipolo rep. Crispin Beltran warned that the President's insistence on giving the beleaguered Garcia the benefit of the doubt would bring down the anger of pensioners on both their heads.

He said if the GSIS were in collapse, the President would have to answer to the people for protecting Garcia who has been accused of mismanaging and misbranding the funds of the state-run pension fund.

"President seems to want to save the problem in the GSIS. Garcia's infamy is already well-established, and the grounds for his immediate sacking are very firm. Why is President insisting on protecting Garcia?" asked Beltran.

Beltran said all public officials should be explained if the public call for Garcia's removal is ignored by the czar of Garcia, he said it was not just House representatives and GSIS employees who are demanding his ouster but also hundreds of thousands of state employees who have been unable to access their GSIS benefits.

He said Garcia's approval and implementation of various allegedly irregular GSIS board decisions and transactions probably had the approval of the President.

He urged Ombudsman Simeon Marcelo not to waste time in acting on the graft charges which Beltran has filed against Garcia.

He said that Marcelo should also throw the book at Garcia for recklessly undermining the welfare of state employees.

A press statement from the GSIS employees union yesterday said a joint executive and legislative assembly had resolved to dismiss Albert Velasco as the union's president for leading protest demonstrations against Garcia allegedly without the union's authority.

Robert Ibasco, spokesperson of the Kapisanan ng mga Manggagawa ng GSIS (KMG), said Velasco's actions was not covered by a formal resolution of majority of the members of the joint assembly.

The joint assembly, which is said to be the policy-making body of the GSIS employees' union, is made up of district representatives in the home office and chapter presidents in GSIS field offices.

Velasco and the joint assembly both claim to have the support of majority of GSIS employees in rallying opposite sides to the controversy surrounding Garcia.

A separate resolution authorized incumbent union vice president Joseph Pellazar to assume the duties of union president and to negotiate with the GSIS management on certain policies affecting the rank-and-file.

At the House of Representatives, the Garcia controversy has also split the Bermuda bloc, a six-member group of congressional district representatives who represent two congressional districts in Cavite.

Bonifacio rep. Crispin "Boying" Remulla, 43, has taken the side of Garcia while his younger brother, second district Rep. Gilbert Remulla, 34, is pushing for an investigation into the alleged anomalies in the GSIS.

"It's no sibling rivalry. It's just a difference of views," Gilbert said in a phone interview.

He said that he and Crispin have "recalcitrant differences of opinion" but they have a lot more in common. Both belong to the Nacionalista Party and are in the opposition bloc in the House.

Crispin said that he is filing a resolution calling for a House investigation into the reinsurance contract of the National Power Corp. following Cayetano's allegation that an alleged syndicate of private insurance companies, which had previously benefited from Napocor's insurance business, was behind moves to oust Garcia.

Gilbert said he decided to co-sponsor the resolution calling for a probe as he claims to have received reports of mismanagement of GSIS funds and chose "not to be investigated."

Cynthia D. Rodasco, Carlito Pablo and Norman Bordadora

United Auctioneers, Inc.
TRUCKS, VANS & HEAVY EQUIPMENT
5 DAY PUBLIC AUCTION
OCTOBER 21, 22, & 23, 2004
(THURSDAY, FRIDAY & SATURDAY)
Sale starts at 8:30 AM SHARP!
Catch The Best At
SUBIC BAY
INSPECTION DATE: (TUESDAY TO WEDNESDAY)
REGISTRATION DATE: (TUESDAY TO SATURDAY)

MITSUBISHI MK200

KATO 45TON CRAWLER TELESCOPIC CRANE

KOMATSU D65P-8

FUSO 10W TRACTOR HEAD

ISUZU 10W CARGO DUMP TRUCK

ISUZU FORWARD KING VAN
ALSO AVAILABLE: LOCALLY ACQUIRED VEHICLE

FUSO CANTER DAMLIFT TRUCK

MITSUBISHI S-DOOR

HONDA ODYSSEY
SUBIC TEL NOS.: (047) 252-1129 • 252-1155 loc 58 FAX NO.: (047) 252-0160
MANILA TEL NOS.: (02) 9291868 • 9285581 • 426-3900 • 453-3470 • CEL NO. 09178888824
FAX NO.: (02) 929-0760 EMAIL: info@unitedcorp.com WEBSITE: www.unitedcorp.com

DOJ may cancel passport of suspected Cebu drug lord

By Philip C. Tubeza

JUSTICE Secretary Raul Gonzalez yesterday said the government was studying whether it should cancel the passport of suspected drug lord Calvin de Jesus Tan so he could be deported back to the country after his arrest in Hong Kong last week.

"We want to get first crack in his case," Gonzalez said.

He would be conferring with Chief State Prosecutor Jovencito Zuño on the possibility of asking the courts to cancel Tan's passport.

Tan, 25, a Chinese-Filipino who holds a Philippine passport, was arrested by customs officers in Hong Kong last Friday at a ferry terminal bound for Macau, Seized from him were 880,000 worth of rock or shabu and a small amount of shabu and cocaine.

Tan has been tagged as the financier of three drug laboratories in Mandaue City where 675 kilos of shabu worth P3.3 billion were confiscated by anti-narcotics agents on Sept. 24. During the raid, the police also arrested 11 men, eight of whom were foreigners.

While the Philippines and Hong Kong have an extradition treaty, the chance of Tan being extradited soon was slim because he is still facing drug charges in Hong Kong.

Gonzalez said he had talked with Foreign Affairs Undersecretary Franklin Ebdalin about the possibility of negotiating directly with Hong Kong authorities for Tan's immediate repatriation.

He said Cebu Rep. Antonio Cuenco had gone to Hong Kong to see if officials there were willing to give him up.

The justice secretary also ordered Mandaue Mayor Thadeo Ouano and other city officials to explain why they were not able to detect the presence of the drug laboratories in their city.

He had written the mayor, city engineer, treasurer, health officer and assessor, giving them seven days to explain their side.

Gonzalez also received reports that the arrested suspects had "some influence" in the city. Because of this, he considered transferring the preliminary investigation of the cases to Manila.

However, Cuenco said the Cebu chapter of the Integrated Bar of the Philippines opposed the transfer.

Gonzalez said he had formed a special prosecution team to conduct the preliminary investigation in Mandaue.

The police have charged Tan with the Comprehensive Dangerous Drug Act of 2002 before the Mandaue City Regional Trial Court while the 11 arrested suspects have been charged with the illegal manufacture of shabu.

Negros execs honor Rio

By Carla P. Gomez
PDI Visayas Bureau

BACOLOD CITY—Negros Occidental officials continue to express the loss of their beloved daughter Rio Diaz-Cojuangco who passed away on Monday following a six-year battle with cancer.

The provincial board yesterday passed a resolution citing Rio for her work as vice mayor of Pontevedra town and as president of the Vice Mayors' League-Negros Occidental. It also extended condolences to her family.

"As a public servant, she implemented programs and projects geared toward the welfare and benefit of her constituents particularly her women, children and the family in need," the resolution said.

Through her initiatives, numerous surgical, medical and dental missions for poor residents were held in the fourth district of Negros Occidental.

"Her demise evoked a feeling of sadness and great loss not only in her constituents but also in the people whom Rio she touched," the resolution said.

Rio was elected vice mayor of Pontevedra in 1998 when her husband Carlos "Charlie" Cojuangco Jr. was an congressman of the province's fourth district. She also became president of the vice mayor's league in Negros Occidental.

In December that year, Rio was diagnosed to have cancer in the colon. She was brought to the United States for treatment and was declared "cured" in April 1999. She came home in July that year and publicly spoke about her miraculous healing.

She returned to the US for treatment in 2001, after the cancer had spread to her blood cells. She had been in and out of the hospital since.

Last Monday, she died at Sierra Medical Center in Daly City, California. Her remains were cremated in San Francisco, California the next day.

Charlie will arrive in Manila on Sunday with Rio's ashes. A service will be held at the Christ's Commission Fellowship in Manila the following day.

On Tuesday her ashes will be brought to the St. Michael's Church in Pontevedra, about 40 km south from here. The ashes will be placed in a crypt at the Cojuangco family chapel in Hacienda Rafaela, Pontevedra.

Pontevedra Mayor Jose Benito Alcuitas said municipal and barangay officials of their town would wait at the Bacolod airport for the arrival of her ashes which they would escort back to Pontevedra.

"We are saddened by her death but happy that her suffering has ended," said Alcuitas.

"She was a public official who was full of life. Had she lived, she could have done a lot more for the people," he said.

Negros Occidental Gov. Joseph Marañon said Rio was a caring, kind-hearted and good person.

"I believe her close relationship with God helped her endure the pain she went through in her six-year battle with cancer," he said.

Rep. Jose Carlos Lacson (Negr. Occ., 3rd district) said he was in awe of Rio's Christian values and deep faith in God.

Lacson said Rio was a good mother and wife. "I rejoice that she is now with the Lord."

Colonel probed over ₱50-M fortune

[Paragraph 1] of P1.2 million—a slight increase from his P1.1 million net worth in 1999. He also declared a total assets statement of a little below P800,000 from his salary and his wife's income from sisay-and-sid business.

The documents submitted to the Ombudsman said Balbino's statements of assets and liabilities from 2000 to 2003 were "missing" from the files in Camp Aguinaldo.

But by April 17, 2003, Balbino had total capital contributions or savings of P5,542,750.44 under AFPMBAI Account No. 410-0038774-2, while his wife had P7 million under AFPMBAI Account No. 539-01-400004-1, according to the documents.

In about the same time, Balbino received his hands from his subordinates until at the Philippine Army Officers Village (PAOVI) to merely built three-storey house at Lot 3, Sub-block 7, Block 89 in AFPOVAI, the documents also showed.

His neighbors at PAOVI confirmed the findings.

The documents said Balbino and his wife were using at least seven vehicles, including a White Hyundai Starex van, a 2000 Isuzu Trooper registered in his wife's name, a green Toyota Revo, a 1998 Mitsubishi Lancer, a Toyota 4-Runner Jeep Wagon, a Honda Accord and a Honda Civic.

Deal with him

The same documents were sent to the then AFP chief of staff, the office of the Philippine Army commanding general, the Office of the Inspector-in-General and the Office of Ethical Standards and Public Accountability as early as mid-2002.

In Malacañang, President Macapagal-Arroyo's spokesperson said she assured the AFP to deal decisively with the case of Garcia, who is suspected of amassing illegal wealth from kickbacks in military contracts.

"We only have to look at the several military openings in the past to remind ourselves that we should never again give our soldiers reason to take up arms against the government," Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said yesterday in a statement.

"Our commitment to a clean, professional AFP is steadfast and the President stands unequivocally behind the entire command in the pursuit of justice, professionalism and integrity," Bunye said.

"There has been no let-up in our efforts in this direction and the President's support for decisive measures taken by the Chief of Staff on this specific case," he added.

But Arroyo threw her support behind the suspension of Garcia, whom the Ombudsman has charged with dishonesty, grave misconduct and conduct prejudicial to the interest of the service.

Day of Garcia's arrest was recently held at the San Francisco airport in the United States for failing to declare $30,000 he was carrying.

The general's wife told US customs officials that Garcia received travel money and expenses in excess of thousands of dollars from companies and from companies that had been awarded contracts for military hardware, as well as "gratuities money" from Philippine companies that were awarded military contracts to build roads, bridges and military housing.

Garcia reportedly owned 3 condo and a house in the United States, aside from that the Ombudsman found to be disproportionate to his asset by salary of P30,835.

AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Narciso Abaya said other senior officials were being investigated for possible graft offenses.

P60M a year

Retired Comm. Ben Bahilo said the Selection Commission, of which he is a member, had discovered that a retired military official stashed away at least P60 million a year during his time as an active official of the AFP.

Bahilo, a former member of the Reform the AFP Movement, told reporters that the commission made the discovery in the course of his inquiry over the roots of last year's abortive mutiny.

He said the information was included in the confidential papers of the commission's report to Mr Arroyo.

"Our study that we released has one example but an official who set aside at least P60 million a year as a ground. This study was part of the confidential portion of our study," Bahilo said in Filipino.

New isolated case

He said this case was extremely under investigation.

Bahilo said the general in question was "collecting P5 million from a month already" and had wanted to collect an additional P600,000 a month.

"In P5.2 million plus P1 million is P6.2 million. So for one year, his minimum grab was P60 million," Bahilo said.

He also said that the case of Garcia was not an isolated one.

"We have other documented cases that cannot be released. There will be times that will come out...four months for it," PGA reports, from Alexis Romero and Juliet Labog-Javellana

Corrections

In YESTERDAY'S issue, an Entertainment story on Page A2 ("Rio pleased 'everything'"—reviewed that Rio Diaz died in Boston Hospital. Diaz died in Daly City's better Medical Center, which is named in honor of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton who founded the Daughters of Charity in America.

* * *

THE SAME story misnamed that Rio Diaz's husband, Charlie Castanares, was a former representative of Negros Occidental. Castanares is the incumbent representative of the lone congressional district of Negros Occidental. He is serving his third term.

* * *

THE SAME story misstated that Rio Diaz was crowned Mutya ng Filipinas in 1976. Rio Diaz won the title of Mutya ng Filipinas Asia in 1977.

* * *

In THE Sept. 28 issue, the editorial on Page A14—"Hey rich!"—misstated that President Macapagal-Arroyo issued in June 2003 Executive Order No. 20 which set a cap of P10,000 on the monthly salaries of GOCC executives. What Mr Arroyo issued on June 20, 2003 was Memorandum Order No. 20 which suspended increases in the salaries and benefits of top GOCC executives.

* * *

Readers may send their requests for corrections of factual errors in writing to Ricky Tan, ace editor, Philippine Daily Inquirer, PSI Building, Chino Roces cor. Avenue corner Makapagal Avenue, Makati City; fax (63) (02) 892-2963; e-mail: corrections@inquirer.com.ph; and digitalcare@inquirer.com.ph.

Complainants whose lack of fairness or objectivity may be cause to dispel the editor's, readers' reflection, the same addressed for written corrections of the story online, and e-mail address specified in inquirer.com.ph.

Fil-Am 'Idol' rouses 'Jasmania' in Manila

[Paragraph 1] It has finished third in the contest. She was one of two Filipinas who made it to the top 10. Eighteen-year-old Camille Velasco, the other Pinay, is also from Kuwait. Alicia Amanyan features that it is one the title in a one-on-one with runner-up Diana JoiGomez, 16, the youngest finalist along with Trina.

Familiar face

Since the AI finals in May Trina' commercials endorsing a hamburger chain, a phone company and a clothes company have been aired on local television. A giant billboard bearing her face is seen by hundreds of thousands of Metro Manila commuters every day.

During a press conference at the Philippine Hotel last hours of on her arrival, Trina said she did not even remember the bets and mock comments she got from the panel of judges during the whole length of the competition.

"The best comments are probably a positive one and the worst comments are probably a negative one," she said.

O'Brien that AI organizers were planning to raise the minimum age of contestants from 16 to 18, Trina said, "I don't think it matters how old you are. I think age is just a number. It's the state of mind that you're in that counts."

She herself was just 16 when she entered contest. She turned 18 on June 3.

Singing is a passion

To survive the rigors of the competition, Trina said she held on to positive thoughts. "There was a lot of pressure but I kept telling myself I would do it."

Thousands joined the auditorium conducted all over the United States. Trina said she believes talent was not the biggest factor in winning it. "It's the whole package, she is known your personality," she said. "You just have to be yourself."

The single-minded was paid off, too. "Singing is a passion of mine. I was very determined," she added. "If you have that determination and that passion, there nothing can get in your way."

Back to her roots

Trina' 10-day visit will bring her to Tarlac, Cavite, hometowns of her father, Rudy Trias. At They are descendants of Gen. Mariano Trias, after whom another town in the province was named.

On Monday, the singing champ will meet most of her relatives and townmates for the first time. It is unusable from Ramon for Trias to meet at 3 p.m. One hour later, she will pay a courtesy call on Cavite Gov. Ayong Maliksi at the Bonifacio Aguinaldo Center.

Oct. 16, Araneta Coliseum

A performance at the Araneta Coliseum is set on Oct. 16, with other Filipino talents Jay-R, Christian Bautista and Erik Santos.

She loves Filipino food, she said—"dinuguan, sinigang na lapun, adobo and beef steak."

She loves Filipinos, too. "They are very very supportive," she said, recalling how text messages from Filipinos all over the United States helped her stay in the competition. And yesterday, stepping out of the plane, she saw yet another expression of Trina support. Nine who had worked since early morning for her arrival were screaming and cheering her name.

"Wow," Trina said. "That was a whole paparazzi frenzy. There were so many cameras in my face."

But living in the Philippines is not in her immediate plans. "Home for me is Hawaii," Trina said. I love that place. I could probably be based there, and just commute back and forth—to Manila, or LA (California). Home will always be Hawaii, and elsewhere is just work." With reports from AP

Manifesto of Support for

ADMINISTRATOR JAMES C. LEDESMA

SUGAR REGULATORY ADMINISTRATION

from

Panay Federation of Sugarcane Farmers, Inc.
PASSI (Iloilo) Sugar Central, Inc.
Capiz Sugar Central, Inc.

Panay Federation of Sugarcane Farmers, Inc. (PANAYFED), the umbrella organization of fourteen (14) strong sugarcane farmers association in Panay Island, Passi (Iloilo) Sugar Central, Inc. and Capiz Sugar Central, Inc. recognize the initiatives undertaken by SRA Administrator James C. Ledesma which include the following:

- Strengthening of the Mill District Development Councils (MDDC), resulting in increased productivity and production efficiency of sugarcane farmers;
- Successful implementation of Agricultural Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (ACEF) programs focused on helping sugarcane farmers;
- Successful SRA administration resulting in increased domestic sugar production (1.0 Million metric tons to 2.34 Million metric tons at present); thus, reversing the country's sugar supply situation from net importer to world exporter;
- Implementation of Executive Order No. 295 issued by President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo resulting in the reduction of the importation of pre-mix products with high sugar content, enabling the government to collect more revenues from correct tariff assessment;
- Supporting pro-farmer initiatives, such as the assistance given for the importation of much needed fertilizers at low costs.

Panay Federation of Sugarcane Farmers, Inc., Passi (Iloilo) Sugar Central, Inc. and Capiz Sugar Central, Inc. commend Administrator James C. Ledesma for his integrity and competence as Administrator of the Sugar Regulatory Administration.

FRANCISCO PEREZ TREÑAS, President, Panay Federation of Sugarcane Farmers, Inc.
TIBURCIO Y. CORDERO, President, Passi (Iloilo) Sugar Central, Inc.
TERENCE S. UYPITCHOCO, Vice-President / Resident General Manager, Capiz Sugar Central, Inc.

BONIFACIO TE, Asturias Sugarcane Planters' Association, Inc.
RICARDO F. HALAMEDA, JR., New Frontier Sugarcane Planters' Association, Inc.
MARCELO D. BAGUIO, Iloilo Planters Association, Inc.
DIEGO C. VILLEGAS, Panay Sugarcane Producers' Association, Inc.
DANILO S. ABELITA, Capiz Iloilo Sugar Planters' Association, Inc.
EMILIO G. REYES, Panay Integrated Sugar Planters' Association, Inc.
HONORIO B. DIAZ, Lutod Island Sugar Planters' Association, Inc.
MARIANO T. TRIBES, San Enrique Planters' Association, Inc.
JESSE C. FRENCH, Jalaog Sugarcane Planters' Association, Inc.
G. E. E. CUÑADA, Pilar Sugar Planters' Association, Inc.
HORACIO P. PAMES, New Frontier Planters' Association, Inc.
RAYMOND T. GOMEZ, Cadiang Lambunao Multi-Planters' Association, Inc.
ALBERT L. BACOLOD, CLSM Multi-Sectoral Planters' Association, Inc.
DILOLF B. DIAS, Pamaypay Bay, Inc. (DFI)
EFRAIN V. DEJADO, Northern Iloilo Sugar Planters' Association Inc.

SUGAR IS A BRAIN FOOD

CHRISTMAS comes early for the 35 blind children of the Northern Luzon Association for the Blind who dreamed of staging a fund-raising concert to help other blind children. Enjoy Boonsuan, Tau (at left), of the Children's Hour who turns over a check to make their dream come true. Hours they spreads their benefactor in Baguio City.

Man finds perfect wife …

Turn to page A-3

began ... he remarried with No. 3.

"I am not a playboy. I just love serving beautiful women," Kamaruddin Mohammad, 72, was quoted as saying by the New Straits Times newspaper.

Kamaruddin's latest bride, now 74, was also the first woman he married and divorced.

In between marrying Khadijah Udin in 1957 and again on Sunday, the "friendly and easy going chairman" married 11 times. He went at relatively easy to obtain among the Muslim majority in Malaysia. A man can end a marriage by simply saying "I divorce you" to his wife.

Kamaruddin's ex-wives included an Englishwoman and a Thai. The Times said Kamaruddin had stayed with the Thai the longest—for 20 years. His shortest marriage lasted two days.

All of Kamaruddin's previous marriages ended in divorce except with the Thai woman, who died of cancer.

"After she died, I thought of Khadijah and was several people to inquire. I didn't expect her to accept it," said Kamaruddin, who had worked for several multinational companies before retiring in 1992.

Despite all the repeat marriages, Kamaruddin insisted that he was a one-woman man.

"If I like a girl, I'll ask for her hand in marriage. I don't like flings. I also don't believe in marrying more than one woman at a time," he told the Times.

Celebrity

Kamaruddin, a former policeman who hails from the northwestern state of Kelantan, became a national celebrity of sorts when he remarried Khadijah.

Kamaruddin said he was very happy to be reunited with Khadijah whom he married the first time in 1957. He divorced her a year later after she bore him a daughter, who is now 47. He is believed to have fathered at least seven children.

Khadijah told the Times that she accepted his remarkable marriage offer because she was terribly alone after the death of her third husband.

"Kamaruddin also promised to look after me until the end of our lives and said he did not want to continue his habit of remarrying repeatedly," she said.

As in his marriages, Kamaruddin could not stick to a job. After a stint with the police where he left schools in the 1950s, he held various jobs in the private sector until his retirement in 1992.

From job to job

"I just moved from one job to another if there were better offers. There have been so many jobs, maybe as many as my marriages," he said.

Sujecha Nun, a staff assistant with the popular Malaysia Book of Records, said her company did not have any records of marriage lines.

"It is not in the records. We don't have such details. We feel it is difficult to verify," she said.(AFP)

Setting world and national records is a popular obsession in Malaysia, which once boasted the world's tallest buildings, the Petronas Twin Towers.

Last month, a Malaysian woman overcame 17 aeroplane bans to set a new world record for spending 36 days in a glass cage with 6,500 of the poisonous arachnids. Reports from AP and AFP

Blind Baguio kids see bright future in music

Turn to page A-3

concert was from a single Baguio donor who had been touched by the SLAB kids' presentation during the CD launch fever in March.

It was a simple statement, but by their teachers and SLAB volunteers, the children cheered when Ambassador Hermenio Ian Jr., representing three CD benefactors, and Rhea Marcos, CH assistant executive director handed the check to Digna Rosario, SLAB executive director.

Looking forward

And when the future concern arose, several blind benefactors with a song, "You Raise Me Up."

Jonathan Padilla, 11, who has been learning to read and write in Braille for three years now, said he looked forward to playing the piano before a huge crowd at the planned special performance.

Meanwhile, he has learned to sing and wants to be a masseur, too, so he could help his parents. "I can do a lot of things," said Jonathan, who is from Pengasinan. "I want to visit my twin sisters."

Seven-year-old Ariel Soriano, one of the youngest in the group, was very excited about the prospect of joining a variety. So has other dreams as well: "I want to be a teacher someday," he said, smiling. Ariel is from Solano, Cagayan.

More than a gift

SLAB is a charitable institution that educates blind children and trains them in livelihood programs so they can be productive members of society.

"These children come here with nothing—they don't even know how to make water," said Rosario, executive director. "But we make sure that when they leave, they are efficient and ready to be accepted in public or private schools."

On the same day CD launch, over a month ago, per check to the Baguio Center for Young Adults Inc., whose words need more than a gift of funds.

Marlene de Castro, SLAB executive director, said the money—P554,134.50 from various agencies and individuals in Baguio—would be used to educate and train young people who have been through traumatic experiences.

Among the programs it will support is the Adolescent Reproductive Health Life Planning for Children in Conflict with the Law. This program's beneficiaries include children who are in jail, and those who have suffered physical and sexual abuse.

Powerful allies

Dr. Castro said these teenagers needed counseling before anything else, but that they could be developed as leaders for their peers and models for their communities.

At the SLAB program, Tan enrolled that CH, which he had worked with since 1999, donated medical equipment—incline machines, nebulizers, blood pressure apparatus—to the Baguio General Hospital five years ago. He said the equipment had since benefited at least 100 young patients every month.

More support

"Children's Hour is aware of the needs of disadvantaged and depleted children," Tan said. He announced that even more support had poured in from professionals, workers and businessmen who wished to promote children's rights and welfare.

He said CH's latest batch of allies were from the Personnel Management Association of the Philippines, which held its 41st annual convention at Camp John Hay that day.

Tan, business president and CH trustee Alexander Prieto-Bonnevalle, and CH executive director Evangeline Mayuga signed a memorandum of agreement with the PMAP community relations committee during the convention. At least 45 member-companies pledged support for CH projects.

₱1,200 food subsidy for poor planned

people—the rest Church, mosque-goers, Catholics, not just priests and bishops—it's the same as asking how Filipinos can help in the solution," he said.

A third of what's required

Sangco said that based on 1994/97 consumption data, food coupon worth about ₱1,200 would be given to each poor family to be used entirely per month.

"That represents one-third of the required nutritious intake of a family of five. According to nutritionists, you will use the ₱ purchase at least one-third of the required nutritional intake," she said.

The fund is not limited to new and current poors. "In fact," she said, coming those with jobs and the number is not increasing, we have to provide milk—and milk is quite expensive."

The subsidy undertaking is expected to cost the government's billion of pesos.

"If you have this number of five million families of ₱1,200 per month, we would need about ₱6 billion per month. But we don't want this to universal," Sangco said.

She said the "augmentation" would be on a "need basis" per family, conducted in a manner that would not promote the dole-out mentality.

"People might flock in as because they heard we were going to give away groceries," Sangco said. "Anyway me, we don't have that much resources, and we're not encouraging ... dependency. We have to help according to how it is needed by the family."

Philhealth cardholders

Health cards could be the initial targets of the coupon system.

"If there are Philhealth card-holders who are of the same time suffering from hunger, they can use that access card or coupon for that purpose," she said.

Sangco said the budget would come from the disaster funds of the national government and from the savings of the NAPC. She said the DSWD and the NAPC were also tapping the help of the business community.

The subsidy would not exist from the P956-million disaster fund. She did not say where the bulk of the monthly requirement would come from.

"Before the month ends we would hopefully have the system in place). But it doesn't mean we are not giving food to the hungry because all they have to do is to go to the nearest local [city or municipal] hall and they will be given help," she said.

But Renato Reyes, spokesperson of the militant Bayan Alyansang Makabayan, described the scheme as "a scary big month."

"Ang [the] ₱1,200 per month per family would bring some solutions ... Lower prices of basic commodities and services such as electricity, anything that will increase their purchasing power," Reyes said.

He said debt servicing and military spending were draining the national budget when the government's resources should be spent for more efficient social services.

'Gimmick'

Five opposition lawmakers also scoffed at Malacañang's "pabitaya gimmick."

Rep. Francisco Datol Jr. (Bayan, 2nd Mindanao) said the coupon system was a "band-aid solution to a solution that needs surgery" on a long-term program.

"Unfortunately, up to now, there's still no population management policy," he said. "Many of the food coupon program will promote unsanitary and will be a logistics delivery nightmare."

Anakpawis Rep. Crispin Beltran said that while the system was not an entirely bad idea, it could, like dole-outs, "only go so far."

"What guarantee would the coupons cover? A can or two of sardines, two packets of instant noodles, half-kilo bags of sugar, coffee and milk? There are hardly enough to sustain families," he said.

Beltran said that instead of distributing food coupons, Malacañang should ramp by tax schemes and rechtek its position on the privatization and liberalization trend of the administration.

Socio-volcano

Rep. Rafael Mariano, also of Anakpawis, said the coupons would not serve to quell the ongoing mass actions against worsening poverty, hunger and mass unemployment.

He said hunger was a "socio-volcano" that would erupt anytime unless immediately addressed.

Sen. Juan Flavier, Lito Lapid, Manuel Villar Jr. and Rodolfo Biazon—were one in saying that the plan should be implemented only in the short term.

Lapid said the government needed to address the problem by generating people jobs and livelihood.

Bandage solution

"It would be better to teach people how to fish rather than just give them fish," he told reporters in Pampanga.

Flavier said the coupon system was "a good short-term solution" to the serious problem of hunger.

"But the government should be careful ... That the short-term solution (of families) is footloose and the system is not abused," he said.

Biazon said that rather than providing food coupons, the government should consider "more long-term programs" to address the problem.

He warned that the coupon system could even cause more discontent. "If it is communalized, as what happens in the distribution of relief goods during disasters."

Villar said the intention to provide food to poor families was good. But did not address the "root of the problem."

"It's like covering with a bandage a deep and festering wound," he said. "The bleeding may stop but the wound won't heal." With reports from Christine O. Avendaño, Norman Bordadora, Cynthia D. Rosario

Palace mad at Piatco: Are they hiding something?

Piatco, which is 60 percent owned by the Ayala family, 20 percent by Peapod, and 10 percent by Nuko Boot Corp. of Japan.

Fault-finding

Lawyoung Antonia Oreta, legal counsel of Piatco president Cheng Yong, said Piatco had nothing to hide. "Data Terminal 3 is a state-of-the-art, fully functional and modern international airport terminal," she said in a statement.

What Piatco is opposed to is an investigation by the Senate committee on economic matters with no outward purpose other than fault-finding to aid of the government's defense before the ICC and ICSID arbitration panels," she said.

She said it was improper for the government to use the Philippine Senate as the defense arm of the government in the absence of an amicable settlement between the government and Piatco.

The administration had offered to pay Piatco ₱350 million so it could operate the term terminal after the Supreme Court ruled that Piatco's contract with the government had with the government but what Piatco refused the offer, saying it was not enough to cover its costs. Due to the impasse, the new airport remained a mothballed indefinitely.

To counter its woes, Piatco filed an arbitration case with the Paris-based International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) and hearings have started in Singapore. Piatco is asking for a compensation of about ₱6.01 billion.

Piatco's Germinic partner Fraport AG filed a similar arbitration case with the World Bank's International Center for Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID). The German firm is seeking reimbursement of its ₱4.03 million investment in Ilaya 3.

Crazy

In the arbitration case, the administration said there were defects in the construction of Ilaya 3. It had asked the arbitration tribunal permission to inspect how the project was defined.

Sen. Joker Arroyo dismissed as "crazy" Piatco's decision to bar a government team from inspecting the passenger terminal.

"How in the world can Piatco tell government to inspect their property? We are now officially declared as bad guys. We are now officials to look at the terminal?" he told reporters.

But Mr. Arroyo said Piatco was not entitled to any payment because the Supreme Court had nullified the contract with the government. "If you're selling something, you should show the product," he said.

In an interview with the Inquirer, Bautzer said he was puzzled why Piatco would suddenly be interested about having witness to its testimony after giving members of Congress and the entire industry access of the facility last week.

Bautzer testified as Piatco vice president Mariano Tolentino's excuse that the company had re-opened half a million excuse a day, he obviously chose to fight up the place. (Piatco's Ilaya Gate 3 is gauged for five days last week.)

"This only proved Piatco's greatest to jack up the costs," Bautzer said, alluding to charges that Gate 3's costs were padded.

No padding of costs

Tolentino, who denied that the contractors had padded its costs, said the invitation to members of Congress and the airline industry was initiated by Takenaka International Corp., the Japanese construction company that built the terminal.

He said the company spent ₱55,000 to roughly ₱3.89 million) to make the airport terminal fully operational during the five-day period when it was opened to the public.

From Sept. 16 to 30, Gate 3 opened all air-conditioners, escalators, walkways and baggage carousel. Television and the users included personnel to work the escalators, guards and other staff.

The tests were carried out by Takenaka, which we have to pay. There is nothing wrong with that amount," said Tolentino.

Piatco invited ambassadors and embassy heads on Sept. 27 and 28. On Sept. 29, more than 50 top executives of agency representatives toured the terminal. On Sept. 30, Piatco brought in Senators Edgardo Angara, Juan Flavier, Farida and Alfredo Lim.

Bayan Muna Rep. Joel Tiodoro said the airport was a lemon aptly response and an attempt by the government to score because points.

"Need screaming ready is (the issue) the people from the real is, ever that led to the economic crisis," he said. "There is a need for an honest-to-goodness economic policy to avert that kind of crisis that will pave the way for lasting solutions to poverty."

On the edge

Malacañang justified the coupon scheme.

"In any crisis, the government must serve first and foremost those who are on the edge of starvation," Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said, adding:

"Indeed, hometown temporary is called for as we lead on in the more fundamental and larger reforms that would deal with poverty permanently."

Bunye said Presidential Management Assistant Arroyo's anti-poverty formula was focused on opening more routes for opportunity "even as we spread the safety net and security nets that enable the people to overcome from extraordinary difficulties to more stable lives."

But even administration senators—Juan Flavier, Lito Lapid, Manuel Villar Jr. and Rodolfo Biazon—were one in saying that the plan should be implemented only in the short term.

Lapid said the government needed to address the problem by generating people jobs and livelihood.

Bandage solution

"It would be better to teach people how to fish rather than just give them fish," he told reporters in Pampanga.

Flavier said the coupon system was "a good short-term solution" to the serious problem of hunger.

"But the government should be careful ... That the short-term solution (of families) is footloose and the system is not abused," he said.

Biazon said that rather than providing food coupons, the government should consider "more long-term programs" to address the problem.

He warned that the coupon system could even cause more discontent. "If it is communalized, as what happens in the distribution of relief goods during disasters."

Villar said the intention to provide food to poor families was good. But did not address the "root of the problem."

"It's like covering with a bandage a deep and festering wound," he said. "The bleeding may stop but the wound won't heal." With reports from Christine O. Avendaño, Norman Bordadora, Cynthia D. Rosario

Court orders BIR to refund Lucio Tan ₱1.036 billion

tax evasion case the Bureau of Internal Revenue filed against him in 1993.

The Supreme Court terminated the nine-year case of tycoon in the Makilala Metropolitan Trial Court (MeTC) on July 13. The high court reversed the rulings of the Court of Appeals and the Makilala Regional Trial Court, which both affirmed the March 1999 decision of the MeTC to dismiss the tax evasion cases against Tan and several officers of Fortune Tobacco Corp.

Excess payments

In a 16-page ruling released yesterday, the CA ordered the BIR to refund the Court of Tax Appeals decision ordering the BIR to refund the ₱1,036,772,946 in excess taxes paid by Tan's Fortune Tobacco Corp. from 1989 to 2003.

The BIR has 15 days to appeal the ruling.

The appellate court said the tax court was correct in ruling that payment of the BIR Revenue Regulation No. 17-99, under which the taxes were collected, was illegal.

"While we may agree with the BIR's that administrative agencies in the exercise of their rule-making power rule formulate rules and regulations in order to achieve the declared policies as laid down by Congress, the same does not hold true in the present case," said the ruling penned by Associate Justice Jose C. Sabio Jr.

"It is beyond cavil that Revenue Regulations 17-99 exceeded the provisions of RA 8240 so that the CTA was correct in declaring it as nulling," it added.

Associate Justices Rodrigo Veredo and Mariano Asuncion Del Rosario concurred in the decision.

Excise tax hike

The Department of Finance issued the regulation in accordance with Republic Act 8240, which mandated a 12-percent increase in excise taxes on cigarettes packed by machine and a 5-percent increase in the ad valorem component as a percentage of the price to the specific tax (a fixed amount per unit of the product) system.

The law, which took effect on Jan. 1, 1997, set a three-year transition period.

However, the regulation issued said the revenue regulations resulted in an unauthorized "administrative legislation" because it was contrary to RA 8240.

Not lower

It noted that the BIR regulation had said that the excise taxes is to be collected from the cigarettes should "not be lower than the excise tax" paid before Jan. 1, 2000.

But the court said Congress' intention was to impose the same rates of taxes "which is to increase the 12 percent over it it may be lower than the amount being paid previous to Jan. 1, 2000."

Issued by the finance secretary on Dec. 16, 1999, the revenue regulation covered the taxes made cigarettes brands Champion M 100's, Salem M 100, Salem M King, Consul F King, Consul Light 100's, Camel Filters Box 20's, Winston F Kings, and Winston Light.

On Feb. 7, 2000, Fortune filed an appeal before the BIR Appellate Division, initially claiming that it was overtaxed by ₱1,036,387,023 from Feb. 7, 2000 to Dec. 31, 2001 but it was dismissed.

The tobacco company went to CTA and won. The BIR appealed to the CA but lost.

Dayrit to critics: It's the economy, not population

with huge populations—why are they rich?" he said. "China has a huge population."

Wrong answer

It was far from a perfect example. The United Nations World Food Program has said China's recorded instances of food sufficiency "hides huge disparities in the insecurity in marginal and remote areas."

Yesterday, even the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) pointed to the country's high population growth rate as a major cause of poverty—and, therefore, hunger—in the Philippines.

UNFPA country representative Dr. Ishtiaq Inayat said the government should declare a "sound population policy" if it intended to achieve the millennium development goals of cutting the incidence of people suffering from hunger and those earning less than $1 a day by year 2015.

Inayat, guest of honor at the 30th anniversary celebration of the Training Institute of Economic Development (TIDE) in Makati City, said the situation was "really serious."

The levels of hunger in the country was "perhaps one of the highest," he said in an interview. Also, he said, although the Philippines' gross national product has moderately increased, per capita GNP was static. "Growth here is not really pro-poor ... it has benefited the rich more, so the poor people are getting poorer. If you see more hunger now, you should not be surprised."

Lack of interest

The Philippines was one of 179 countries that signed the ICPD in Cairo, Egypt, in 1994. Manila made a commitment to meet eight development goals, which mostly involved sound reducing poverty incidence and providing health care.

But not, Inayat noted, the high birth rate in the Philippines had obviously affected the purchasing power of the people. "And this is the "very high influence," he said, and "all these things

168 million Filipinos in 29 years, says UN

THE POPULATION of the Philippines is expected to double in 29 years despite a projected decline in the country's growth rate, the country's latest census results the country's birth rate, a joint government-UN report said yesterday.

The population, currently at 84 million in 2000, is growing by 2.34 percent a year, the Commission on Population and UN Population Fund report said.

"At this rate, the population will double in only 29 years," the report said.

The country's population increased 25.4 percent in 10 years, from 60.7 million in 1990 to 76.5 million in 2000.

Nongovernment organizations tasked to handle planning blame the high growth rate on opposition from the Catholic Church and President Macapagal-Arroyo.

"It seems [some] religious conservatives and the ruling clique of government officials adhere to inaccurate conclusions" were to blame, said Elizabeth Estrella, executive director of the private Family Planning Organization of the Philippines.

Junior Melgar, from the same government group cabinet, accused the Arroyo administration of "anti-family" policies that have undermined reproductive health services because of President Arroyo's bias toward natural family planning methods.

Other predominantly Catholic countries, including Brazil and Mexico, have seen their fertility rates drop to 2.3 percent, or 2.7 children births recorded every year.

As he was saying...

Inayat had something to say about overpopulation, too. Starting in his point, he said Thailand brought down its population growth from 3 percent to 1.5 percent in 10 years because contraceptives were made widely available.

"Their economic activity and economic policies ... brought down their population. They supported them financially. They built more farm-to-market roads," he pointed out.

In short there, he was asked, what was really pulling down the Philippines? "The economy isn't working," the health statistician said again. And "the health services and basic health services aren't being delivered on one point, he added: "[Also] structural problems. We're busy discussing this for a long time—who's getting rich in the economy?"

Until Inayat praised. If farmers and the middle class are getting enough to live on, they would limit the number of their children so they could plan for the future. "I don't think that it's the other way around."

Solomino said the company also invited Senators Alfredo Lim and Senator Sergio Osmeña III to tour the facility.

"All the major airlines were represented like Thai Airways, Japanese Airlines, Philippine Airlines, Northwest. They were all satisfied with what they saw. Most were surprised," said the Piatco official.

Not this year

Mendoza said the terror admissions test would like to open the passenger terminal as soon as legal issues were resolved.

"The intention of the government is to open Ilaya 3 but I am not sure if we would do that this year," Mendoza told reporters at the sidelines of the 20th Philippine Business Conference session here.

Leaders of the House of Representatives urged the government and Piatco to enter to amicably settle the dispute.

House Majority Leader Prospero Nograles (Lakas-Tarlac City) and Rep. Mark O. Pantaleon (Lakas, Bataan City), chair of the House committee on transportation and communications, said the continued closure of the terminal had a chilling effect on the country's potential investors.

"If not resolved, it allows for lawyer than a court battle which would affect public interest and convenience," Nograles said. With a report from Lyn Resurrección Bulosan

Palace told: Stop playing dumb on 'jueteng'

By Carlito Pablo

HOUSE Minority Leader Rep. Francis Escudero (NPC, Sorsogon) yesterday asked Malacañang to "stop playing dumb" on the betting jueteng of Pangasinan governor Oscar Orbos.

"The government knows who the jueteng lords are, and the government big fish could drag them," Escudero said. "Every peso and inspector of the jueteng infrastructure is known to the government authorities."

Escudero described as "both comic and tragic" the Palace's reaction to Gma's recent revelation that if not national government officials are protecting jueteng operations.

Malacañang had asked Gma to name names, pledging to take action against those jueteng coddlers.

"The easier effort to put meddlesome Gma on the spot has only intensified the general public perception that some top people in the government have been jueteng coddlers," Arroyo said.

No consensus

Escudero said that instead of playing blind and deaf, the government should instead mobilize a no-nonsense effort to stop the illegal numbers game.

"Department of Interior and Local Government Secretary Angelo Reyes is in the best position to lead the fight against jueteng since he resigned from a government tainted by allegations of jueteng involvement," Escudero said.

Escudero was referring to Reyes' withdrawal of support as then armed forces chief from the impeached President Joseph Estrada when arrest warrants came out for things involving jueteng payoffs.

Reyes' withdrawal of support from Estrada was the high point of the Edsa 2 revolt of 2001 that led to the installation of then Vice President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo as the new President.

"Reyes should lead the anti-jueteng effort to show that he does not have double standards about jueteng," Escudero said.

Escudero pointed out that Reyes has all the means to stamp out jueteng, from his intelligence funds, local government units and the support of the police.

"I determined MIG secretary can stamp out jueteng within a few months," Escudero said. "There is no need to embody outside of government to name names."

Cops go hi-tech

By Clarissa V. Epperis

OF ALL the criticisms thrown at the Philippine National Police, one thing has just become an exception: it's no longer blind when it comes to crime.

The PNP has just completed its multi-level "crime mapping" project that enables police to identify crime-prone areas nationwide—and determine if any threat group is operating anywhere in the country," Inspector Director Hierro, project manager, told the Inquirer yesterday.

With such pieces of updated information, Hierro said the PNP leadership would now easily determine crime areas where a larger police contingent is needed and may not police to order specific crimes happening in specific areas.

The program can also help detectives better understand the modus operandi of serial criminals and hypothesize where these offenders might live," he explained.

The project was begun during the term of former PNP Chief Hermogenes Ebdane Jr. and was completed when Deputy Director Gen. Edgar Aglipay assumed the

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

CIRCULAR NO. 460
Series of 2004

Pursuant to Monetary Board Resolution No. 1150 dated 16 September 2004, Section 5 of Circular No. 416 dated 29 October 2003 is hereby amended to read as follows:

"Section 5. EFFECTIVITY OF SELECTION AND INCLUSION IN BSP LIST

The selection of external auditors shall be valid for a period of three years. BSP selected external auditors shall apply for the renewal of their selection every three years. The provisions of Section 2 (General Requirements) and Section 4 (Application and Pre-qualification Requirements) of this Circular shall likewise apply for each application for renewal.

The Supervision and Examination Sector (SES) shall make an annual assessment of the performance of external auditors and will recommend deletion from the list once prior to the three-year renewal period, if based on assessment, the external auditors' report did not comply with BSP requirements.

External auditors who meet the requirements specified in this Circular shall be included in the list of BSP selected external auditors. In case of partnership, inclusion in the list of BSP selected external auditors shall apply to the audit firm only and not to the individual signing partners or auditors under its employment.

The BSP will circularize to all banks, quasi-banks, trust entities and NBQBAs the list of selected external auditors once a year. The BSP however, shall not be liable for any damage or loss that may arise from its selection of the external auditors to be engaged by banks, quasi-banks, trust entities or NBQBAs for regular audit or special engagements.

This Circular shall take effect fifteen (15) days after publication in the Official Gazette or in a national paper of general circulation.

For the Monetary Board

(sgd.) ARMANDO L. SUNTAY
Officer-in-Charge

29 September 2004

SUPER BRAND PLATINUM 2004

SUPER BRAND GOLD 2003
SUPER BRAND GOLD 2002
SUPER BRAND GOLD 2001
SUPER BRAND GOLD 2000
SUPER BRAND GOLD 1999

PILOT
Rewards Achievement in writing technology
G-2
BOX/CHECK BALL POINT PENS

BL-G2-5
BL-G2-7

Philippine Exclusive Distributor
COSMOS BAZAR, INC.
PILOT CORPORATION
Tokyo, Japan

The WORLD

Lilia Lumbres B. Quiao

Bremer's comments spark political storm over Iraq invasion

WASHINGTON—Former US administrator in Iraq Paul Bremer sparked a political storm on Tuesday by stating no enough US troops had been sent to crush the insurgency.

John Kerry, the Democratic challenger to President George W. Bush in the Nov. 2 US election, called on the Bush administration to acknowledge its misjudgment over the situation in Iraq.

The White House largely remained quiet about Bremer's comments only suggesting that Bremer did not view the issue with Bush, without making a firm denial.

Bremer sparked the controversy with a speech on Monday that contradicted assertions by Bush and top defense department officials that the US military had enough troops if needed to secure Iraq.

The administration has also been embarrassed again by remarks from Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld who said in a speech he had seen no "strong, hard evidence" linking Iraqi president Saddam Hussein and al Qaeda.

Bremer said: "We never had enough troops on the ground."

He told a conference of international businessmen that he advised Bush in May 2003 to find "hard-ball" looting factories if the lack of patrols.

"We paid a big price for not stopping it, because it established an atmosphere of lawlessness," Bremer said.

In a statement sent later to The Washington Post, Bremer stressed his support for the US strategy in Iraq, however.

"I believe that we currently have sufficient troop levels in Iraq," he said, noting that his references to troop levels referred to May 2003, "when I believed we needed rather more soldiers to prevent the early looting that later undermined the looting."

Bremer raised similar concerns about troop levels at a forum at De Pauw University in Indiana on Sept. 16, according to a transcript released by the university.

"The single most important change—the one thing that would have improved the situation—would have been having more troops in Iraq at the beginning and throughout," Bremer was quoted as saying.

"Although I raised this issue a number of times with my generals in mind, I should have been even more insistent," he said.

The White House suggested that Bremer had never raised his concerns with Bush. But spokesperson Scott McClellan did not make a categorical denial.

"They met on a regular basis. I don't remember that Ambassador Bremer ever talked about that, but we never got into the habit of reading out any of those discussions," McClellan said.

The administration made the move that it wanted to keep levels were made in consultation with troop commanders.

Larry Di Rita, the Pentagon spokesman, said in a statement that Rumsfeld relied on recommendations from military commanders and the Joint Chiefs of Staff "as the basis for decisions regarding force levels." AFP

US, Iraqi forces strike more rebel strongholds

BAGHDAD—US and Iraqi forces swept through rebel bastions south of Baghdad and pounded positions held by Iraq's most wanted, Abu Musaab al-Zarqawi, in Fallujah Wednesday, pressing on with a promised anti-insurgency crackdown as Iraq's upside took center stage in the US presidential race.

And on the second day of a surprise visit, British foreign Minister Jack Straw cautioned widespread skepticism that the war-torn country could be ready for January 2005 troop-ballot Prime Minister Ayad Allawi would not hold to time for elections set for January.

The US military announced in a statement overnight that it had launched its largest operation to date in the Babil province south of Baghdad, in a bid to dismantle insurgent cells there and cut off the western rebel enclave from some of its vast bases.

"While launching up 20 companies during the initial sweep, the insurgents also provided Fallujah directly overnight, hitting what is described as a warning of ring leaders based in Zarqawi, the most wanted man in Iraq.

There was no immediate report of any casualties after the raid.

The Democratic senator has been off limits to ground troops for months and in making a supposed

LOCAL residents try to rescue intact household items from the rubble of homes flattened in an overnight air strike in Fallujah, Iraq on Wednesday. —

to mark the climax of a bid by Allawi's government and his US allies to reclaim the country's hardest hit spots ahead of the January vote.

In a separate threat, thousands of US-Iraq forces thrust into the rebel stronghold of Samarra last week, killing more than a hundred insurgents.

On Wednesday, elite Iraqi army and US troops were continuing their sweep for wanted militants while pressing on with emergency reconstruction work in the battle-scarred city.

A US officer told an AFP reporter on the ground that elections would be held in 90 per cent capacity by Thursday and children would be able to return to school by Saturday.

The occupant of Samarra, a key insurgent hotbed north of Baghdad, is being held as a model for future efforts to retake the country's two largest by the end of the year. AFP

Scientists recreate killer genes from the 1918 flu pandemic

PARIS—Scientists working in top-security labs say they have recreated pathogens from the 1918 flu pandemic, one of the deadliest plagues of the 20th century, in a bid to find out why the strain was so extraordinarily lethal.

Using reverse genetic engineering, the US team took two key genes from the 1918 virus and inserted them into human flu viruses to infect lab mice were known to be immune.

The two genes code for a spike-like molecule called haemagglutinin (HA), which enables the virus to enter the cells of its host, and another protein, neuraminidase (NA).

The mice were injected in the nose with the recombinant viruses.

Within three days, nine flue had been exposed to the HA gene were mortally ill. Two recovered. Instead the virus had rampaged through their lungs, producing inflammation and hemorrhaging characteristic of the symptoms induced by the 1918 outbreak.

At least 20 million and perhaps as many as 50 million people died in the 1918-1919 pandemic, which took toll of any disease in the last century.

Scientists say that the disease lurks in humans by mutating bird-kind flu, possibly after passing through pigs, which can also be a harbor. Both humans and avian viruses and thus are less than to swap genes as the viruses reproduce.

For that reason, experts are deeply concerned about the avian flu that has broken out in poultry flocks in parts of Southeast Asia may acquire genes that will make it highly infectious as well as lethal for humans.

The research team, led by Yoshihiro Kawaoka of the University of Wisconsin at Madison, notes that the experiment is only confidative for lab mice, not humans.

Nevertheless, they say, it adds strongly to suspicions that what made the epic a 1918 virus strain so extraordinarily vicious was the unique profile of its two genes.

That finding opens up good avenues for Singapore tools for spotting emergent viruses with this genetic signature, thus tackling an outbreak in its early stages.

"Since the properties of the (1918) HA gene that gave rise to its lethal infectivity are best understood, it should be possible to devise effective control measures and to identify those individuals who are most susceptible to infection," the authors say.

"Thus the greatest threat to humans as well as other animal species," the authors say.

The study is published on Thursday in Nature, the British science weekly. AFP

IMAGINE . . .
Fax Imaging Film
AS GOOD AS THE ORIGINAL
WE GOT IT!
For use on BROTHER, PANASONIC, SHARP, TOSHIBA & PANATEC
Compatible Laser Toner POWDER
Fullmark
Ellipz Black Quality Toner
For Inquiries: (02) 301-0909

Cheney, Edwards controlled in aggressive debate

LAS VEGAS—Vice President Dick Cheney and Democrat John Edwards wrestled relentless rather than rivals in their vice presidential debate on Tuesday, keeping their exercises under tight control while still delivering fierce personal attacks on each another.

Both candidates seemed anxious to avoid facial expressions and other that that might provide bulletin for negative post-debate spin. Both spoke clearly and pointed of text with their hands. Both delivered their thinner smarks more in a tone of sorrow than anger.

One group of voters in Florida was impressed by Cheney's calm, collaborative manner and command of his material and said he presented an image of strength and unflappability while the younger Edwards seemed less seasoned.

"Cheney seemed a little stronger, possibly because of his experience. He took language seemed more stable and his command of the facts impressed me," said Debra Lacy, a casino worker who was undecided in the Nov. 2 election.

There were significant realistic differences between the candidates. Cheney spent much of the time looking down while Edwards engaged the camera and smiled more often. Cheney occasionally gave laughter only as a way of suggesting that his opponent's arguments contained so many distortions that he did not know where to begin rebutting them.

When Edwards, who runs a company that makes paint signs and placards, was struck by how Edwards quoted verbatim some of the responses offered by his presidential running mate. John Kerry in last Thursday's first presidential debate. He said it made it seem as if the North Carolina senator did not have words of his own.

Edwards quoted Kerry as saying the United States had allowed Osama bin Laden, architect of the attacks against the United States on Sept. 11, 2001, to escape when he was trapped in Afghanistan. He also repeated Kerry's words that the United States was hunting 90 percent of the financial backers of terrorists. He told of the casualties in the war in Iraq.

Cheney was obviously well prepared for these lines and offered responses that President George W. Bush had not received. When Edwards, who runs a company that makes paint signs and placards, was struck by how Edwards quoted verbatim some of the responses offered by his presidential running mate, John Kerry,

Steam, magma building up in Mt. St. Helens

MOUNT ST. HELENS NATIONAL VOLCANIC MONUMENT—Magma accumulating beneath the Mount St. Helens volcano on Tuesday, pushing up the lava crust and creating a bulging lake in the crater, a government scientist said.

Mount St. Helens, which erupted in 1980 and killed 57 people, has been steaming since mid-sth Sixth, prompting the US Geological Survey to raise its highest level of alert, a spokesperson for the agency said.

The lava dome created by the eruption of 1980 emptied but there is total of 46 meters and heated rock has melted part of a glacier melted next to the dome to the crater, creating a bubbling lake, Dr. Cascades volcano observatory said.

"About 20 percent of the lava (dome) has been delivered by intrusion of magma into the system," Iannaccone told reporters at outdoor headquarters in Vancouver, Washington, 54 km south of Mount St. Helens.

The latest series of eruptions are the first since 1986, when small explosions ashed forest to the west dome.

Mount St. Helens will most likely undergo a similar two building event, lowering and, rather than exploding violently and causing widespread damage.

The USGS closed roads to visitors some of the Johnston Ridge Observatory as a safety precaution, although tourists and media flocked to the Coldwater Ridge Visitor Center north of the mountain. Reuters

Thai PM fires ministers over bird flu

BANGKOK—Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra fired ministers responsible for dealing with a bird flu crisis and violence in five largely Muslim south on Wednesday just seven he ahead of a general election.

Thaksin said he wanted to bring more experience whose can the problems, which analysts said were hurting his coalition government's popularity.

"The public he took results," Thaksin told reporters after the announcement, which saw Agriculture Ministry Somsak Thepsuthin ousted speaker and Defense Minister Chetta Thanajaro become the second man to lose the job since violence erupted in the south in January.

Somsak antidated places with Muslim secretary Wan Muhamad Noor Matha, who had become one of seven deputy prime ministers after losing the lobster initially in March.

Chetta, appointed only in March, left the government and was replaced by his deputy, Gen. Jonathan Boonyaratkalin, the chief palace announced.

Thaksin, who once had told a general election by March, but given his government until the end of October to wipe out the SDPD fled flu virus which has killed 11 Thais since January and has prompted heads would sell it if failed.

The government has gone into a frenzy of selling since last week, when Thailand announced its first probable case of human-to-human transmission of the virus, a mother believed to have caught it from her dying daughter.

Health ministry volunteers have been sent out to search for possible human fatal the victims and owners say cash penalty are expected.

Thaksin said he appointed him Mahamad Noor significant minister because his familiarity with provincial governors would help boost Thai's efficiency in tackling bird flu. Reuters

VISIT US AT MICRODATA BOOTH
SANYO
The World's Largest LCD Projector Manufacturer!
Ultra Portable Multimedia LCD Projector
Pictures Speak Louder than Words
GOOD NEWS!!!
Get to host of any of these HIGH-IMPACT PROJECTOR models
XGA PLC-XU51 2,500lm
XGA PLC-XU10 3,500lm
XGA PLC-XL30 2,500lm
SVGA PLC-SU10 3,500lm
and take a load of these special bundle
AVER EPIACK 330 for PC-less presentation
MICRODATA

BANGKOK
FULLPACKAGE
$199
UNIVERSAL STUDIO
MONTHON SHOPPING TOUR
SUKHOTHAI PALACE WELLNESS PACKAGE
HONG KONG 4 Days $245 SYDNEY 4 Days $699
SINGAPORE 4 Days $295 MALAYSIA 4 Days $369
BORACAY 3 Days P5,630
CEBU 3 Days P7,439
BOHOL 3 Days P7,539
PALAWAN 3 Days P10,635
WORLD WINGS
INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL AND TOURS CORPORATION

Paella Party
HOMEMADE KITCHENS CORP.
Order yours now!
For more info and delivery, order direct to:
426-6251 /672-1119 /0920-963-5178
0920-341-9185 /0927-487-2801

BLESSING OF THE FLEUR-DE-LIS- AUDITORIUM : A SERENDIPITOUS AFFAIR

by Marianette Quinapo Martinez

There will be a touch of serendipity when the administration, faculty, staff, students, and alumnae of St. Paul University Manila gather for the blessing of the newly renovated and refurbished Fleur-de-lis Auditorium designed by Architect Dennis Anastacio on 7 October 2004. Forty-seven years ago, on 23 December 1957, the St. Paul College of Manila community gathered for the inauguration and blessing of the Fleur-de-lis Auditorium with mixed feelings of pride and nostalgia. They took pride in the imposing edifice, which completed the neoclassic facade of the school, but felt nostalgic for the Rizal-era-themed garden, the age-old acacia trees and the lotus and goldfish pond that it replaced.

The auditorium, which was built by the late Architect Otto L. Reyes to end perennial problem by his brother Silvestre, was at that time likened in a phrase "rising from the ashes of a vanquish war" or a "monumental tribute to the courage and stamina" of the Sisters of St. Paul de Chartres. It is indeed a fitting tribute to this community of undaunted religious that the centennial of their coming to Philippine shores will be celebrated in the auditorium, which, like ephemera in its second rising from the ravages of times, once more rouses proud nostrils.

While the Chapel of the Crucified Christ is the heart of the SPC Manila campus, signifying the Christian cosmic nature of Dedicated education, the Fleur-de-lis Auditorium is the wellspring of its artistic expression. For nearly fifty years, this hall has witnessed the birth and nurturing of the Parishians' love and gift for the arts: music, dance, and drama. True to the spirit captured by Carlos "Botong" Francisco in the mural in the lobby, the Fleur-de-lis Auditorium is a temple of Philippine art, whose indigenous beauty and rich dynamism have been enhanced and refined by the cultural influences of our Spanish and American colonizers.

Before the school had its own auditorium, its drama group, the Parishian Players Guild, presented its plays to the theaters of its good neighbors, the campus Corazon and Asilo de Manila, dubbed with these three neighboring schools, Maryknoll and St. Theresa's on San Marcelino, only to further down, St. Scholastica's and La Salle, one could have his pick of prestigious Catholic schools in the city of Manila. Glimpses therefore like Tanong Gomez and her cousin Monique Gonzalez Evangelista, Angelica Martinez-Flavier, Jenny Ople-Lim, and Dolly Pecson-Perez acted in dramas like *L'Aiglon* and *Elizabeth and Essex* directed by the legendary Daisy Hontanosas-Avellana, and later by the equally legendary Cecilia Pagsanjan, who was then a young Ateneo graduate hoping for directorial skills.

With the Fleur-de-lis Auditorium, the Parishians brought to life the vision of Botong Francisco: the evolution of the Philippine performing arts. On this stage, Parishians have danced to the beat of native drums and the rhythmic clap of bamboo poles and simulated the simple love stories of the moro-moro coloured by the late Dr. Fabiculus Hemkiang and the comedies of dramatist Dr. Dolores Feliciano, to this hall, prominent of Parishians Glee Club members have rendered soulful zarzuelas and lively folk songs, classical gems from European operas, religious canticles, stagey spirituals, jazzy and pop songs with consistent excellence under the baton of Sr. Maria Visitacion Lozano. Prof. Lucia San Pedro, and Mrs. Mayumi Aguinaldo-Edaña, concertmaster accompanied by the St. Paul Circle Orchestra conducted by Prof. Vicente Salas. And who can forget the Broadway musicals, those delightful showcases of song, dance, and drama, mainly directed by Fr. James B. Reuter, C.I. and produced by the late dearly beloved Mother Superior Angela Perez, SPC, which put St. Paul College of Manila on the cultural map of the nation.

It was in this auditorium that young, budding Parishians stumbled in the brink of fame and stardom as they answered their calling for the performing arts: Sofronio Cruz Soriano-Reid, the late Cecille Santos-Cuenco and Bunny Bernabe-Thompson share honors as Valkyries singers Cecile Legaspi-Gallardo, Noemi Melchor-Lozano, Cynthia Perez, and Anne Bautista-Bonilla, actresses Cecile Guidote-Alvarez, Sara Kalaw-Lewis, Ms. Ivy Reynoso, Chase Santos-Guevara, Ivy Sebastian Cortes, and Sherry Lara-Aligaen and many who did not pursue an acting career but made their mark in other fields like Carmina Cuevillas-Perez, Cecile, Sr. Marisol Cuevillas, Lilia Tecson-Cuevillas, Bess-ga Bellosillo, and Marlene Ayer Bellosillo and Tina Ayer-Velasco. They were joined by James Young from St. Mel, D.C., and Philippine friends Vic Silvoza, Kristine Abad, Miki Aquino, Robert Acevedo, Noel Trinidad, Sabin Aberasa, Dick Chua, and Ben Chu.

It was a glorious age for SPCM, a time when the whole school sang and stamped their fingers to the lute and the beat of the songs and dances being educated in the auditorium. The hall was set up accordingly: raised to the open floor and windows allowed the music to wander into the corridors and the driveway, and fill the campus with its rhythm and joy!

The inauguration of the Fleur-de-lis Auditorium in 1957 was a grand affair, with no less than the Archbishop of Manila, Rufino Santos, D.D. blessing the edifice and presiding over guests like the Papal Nuncio Egidio Vagnozzi, D.D., Mrs. Luz Rosario Magsaysay, and Senator Francisco Rodrigo. The blessing this time will be particularly meaningful and exalted as it will be officiated by the Parishians' best loved priest, Fr. James B. Reuter, S.J. and attended by parents closest to the Parishianhood.

The serendipity in the timing of the phoenix, the first in 1957 and the second 47 years later, will be echoed by the same mixed emotions of pride and nostalgia: pride in the air-conditioning and the state-of-the-art theatre equipment and facilities of the present auditorium and nostalgia for the "golden days in the meadow of our happy youth" when music, dance, and drama reigned supreme: when those with Norwegian, Americans will give way to joyful anticipation because the new President to the newly inaugurated St. Paul University, Manila, Sr. Soyon Medina, herself a Parishian of the age, is determined to put the school back on that cultural map. For the Parishianes of this age, the time to say, "Look, a new day has begun" has indeed come!

3 US physicists win Nobel for 'theory of everything'

STOCKHOLM...Three American physicists won the 2004 Nobel physics prize on Tuesday for showing how tiny quark particles interact, helping to explain everything from how a coin spins to how the universe was built.

David Gross, David Politzer and Frank Wilczek showed how the attraction between quarks—matter's basic building blocks—is strong when they are far apart and weak when they are close together, like the tension in an elastic band when it is pulled.

The Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences said their work helped give "a unified description of all the forces of Nature... From the tiniest distances within the atomic nucleus to the vast distances of the universe."

It explained how "an everyday phenomenon like a coin spinning on a table" is determined by fundamental forces.

The three scientists showed how quarks, the building blocks of protons and neutrons, were held together by a so-called "strong force."

Without this force these would be nothing holding the tiny particles together, nor behind any nuclei building blocks to assemble an ordinary object like a coin.

"They really helped us to understand how it is that quarks are bound together to make protons and neutrons," said David Wark, a particle physicist at the Rutherford Appleton Laboratories in Britain.

Their theory becomes ecquantum chromodynamics, also showed that when quarks are close together or at extremely high energies they act like free particles, a state they called "asymptotic freedom."

In this state, they succulded those of the other forces in subatomic physics—electromagnetism and the "weak force" dealing with nuclear decay—meaning the US five fund needs a first step in "the theory of everything," Gross told listeners by phone from Santa Barbara, California.

A grand unified theory of the universe has eluded scientists, who cannot yet reconcile the way subatomic particles behave with theories on the force of gravity.

"Once you understand all these forces it turns out that there are certain features that cry out for unification," Gross added. "Remarkably at the same energy almost, gravity is as becomes equally strong."

The next stage of unification involves "first just three forces that govern atoms and nuclear behavior. "But also all the cosmos," Gross said. "And's one of the main goals and efforts of the last 20 years to search for the unified theory."

Wilczek, speaking in Cambridge, Massachusetts, said the trio's theories first appeared "outlandish" when they emerged in the '70s and Nobel recognition came as a "great relief."

Pelham, 55, drove out in minutes cone conference announcing the prize at the California Institute of Technology in Pasadena, California.

"It's a shy fit is going to take this in his own quiet way," the institute's president, David Baltimore, told reporters, adding that Politzer was "overwhelmed with gratification."

Reuters

GROSS

POLITZER

WILCZEK

US vetoes Arab resolution seeking end to Gaza raids

UNITED NATIONS—The United States on Tuesday vetoed an Arab-backed draft resolution at the UN Security Council, which would have called on Israel to end its deadly military operation in the Gaza Strop.

Britain, Germany and Romania abstained from the vote, and the 11 other council members voted for it.

The resolution needed at least nine votes on the 15 member council, but also had to avoid a veto from the five permanent members—Britain, China, France, Russia and the United States.

Algerian ambassador Abdallah Baali, whose nation had presented the draft on behalf of Arab members of the United Nations, said "the Security Council has once again failed the Palestinian people."

"It is a sad day for Palestine, it is a sad day for the cause of justice," he said.

The proposed resolution had called for "the immediate cessation of all military operations in the area of Northern Gaza and the withdrawal of the Israeli occupying forces from that area."

It also called for Israel to grant full access to humanitarian workers in Gaza, and urged the Israeli state and the Palestinian Authority to immediately implement commitments outlined in the so-called "roadmap" for peace.

It did not, however, refer to rocket attacks from Gaza by Palestinian militants onto Israeli soil that the current week-old operation is intended to quell.

US ambassador to the United Nations John Danforth seized on that point, blasting the draft resolution as "disingenuous" and saying it "lacks balance and credibility."

The draft "doesn't mention even one of the 800 Qassam rocket attacks launched against Israel over the past two years, it doesn't mention the 200 rockets launched this year alone," Danforth said.

ISRAELI army armored vehicles move from the Palestinian town of Beit Hanoun around an Army outpost Wednesday. AP

Neither did it mention that Qassam rockets "are crude, imprecise devices of terror designed to kill civilians," Danforth added.

Danforth said civilian deaths, especially children, are "always tragic," but added "when the rest of the world gangs up on Israel with an insidious silence about terrorism, it doesn't advance the cause of peace."

A resolution like this "embolden(s) terrorists, encourages counter attacks and contributes to the ultimate terrorist goal of derailing the peace process," Danforth said, urging the Security Council to "restore the necessary morals of care and Israel resolution after the subway and apply pressure evenhandedly on both sides to return to the road of peace."

Vanuatu ambassador to the United Nations, Jean-Marie de Lastelours, said that his country supported the measure.

"It seemed to us essential that the council react quickly to the rapidly deteriorating situation in the northern Gaza Strip and Israeli air support to restrict," De Lastelours said, speaking in French.

France "recognizes Israel's right to defend itself against the odious terrorist acts that strike its population, himself before, it should react with strict respect for international law," he added. AFP

INQUIRER
Vol. 28 No. 282
OPINION

Publisher ...
Editor in Chief ...
Managing Editor ...
Associate Editors ...
Assistant Editor for Business ...
News Editor ...
Opinion Editor ...
Commentary Editor ...
City Editor ...
Assistant City Editor ...
Editorial Consultant ...
Chief Photographer ...
Art & Design Director ...
Head of Circulation ...
President ...
Senior Vice President for Sales and Marketing ...
Senior Vice President for Corporate Services ...
Office Administrator ...
Ad Sales Coordinator ...
All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, distributed, or transmitted in any form or by any means, including photocopying, recording, or other electronic or mechanical methods, without the prior written permission of the publisher, except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical reviews and certain other noncommercial uses permitted by copyright law.

Not a stone upon a stone

Shame game

CUSTOMS Commissioner George Jereos announced Monday that his office had compiled a list of 200 people and firms—mostly consignees, importers and customs brokers—suspected to have engaged in massive indirect or technical smuggling. He referred to the list as his agency's "roster of honor" apparently to signify his readiness to lend a new war against smuggling. Following his designation as the anti-smuggling czar by President Macapagal-Arroyo.

EDITORIAL

This is one issue that the government needs to win decisively and fast if it intends to close the widening budget deficit and stave off a fiscal crisis. Former Sen. Wigberto Tañada, himself a former customs commissioner, has estimated that smuggling deprives the country of at least P175 billion annually—an amount that is almost equal to the projected deficit of about P200 billion for this year. Official data are enough to give an idea of the extent of the problem. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development stated that in 2003, the Philippines reported imports of $37.5 billion whereas its trading partners related their total exports to the Philippines at $48.3 billion. To think that many exporters often understate the value of their goods to keep import duties at a minimum.

Presidential spokesman Ignacio Bunye said on part of the anti-smuggling drive, those on the Jereos list would be paraded before the public like kidnappers and drug traffickers. "We will name (and) shame (smugglers) and expose (it) in the same manner," Bunye vowed.

So the nation will witness another "shame campaign" that invites the Filipino people to condemn suspects before they get to face the courts. In the administration perhaps saying that it cannot trust customs, the prosecution service and the courts to do what they must do to stop the rampant cheating that deprives the government of precious revenue, a crime that Bunye himself has labeled as "economic sabotage"?

Any serious anti-smuggling drive cannot stop with merely identifying the smugglers. While that is obviously a necessary first step, it is but one small step in another journey of a thousand miles. If the customs bureau and Malacañang must absolutely put up a rogues' gallery, there should go about it thoroughly. And that means also identifying the corrupt customs officials and employees who helped them, the government prosecutors who have the habit of losing smuggling cases, and the judges who are notorious for letting smugglers and their cohorts off the hook. It would be a serious mistake to think that this war can be won by merely listing the smugglers, without making sure that they are prosecuted and punished accordingly.

This is not the first time that an administration, this one included, has announced with great fanfare an anti-smuggling drive. The present state of affairs in customs tells much how those earlier initiatives have ended up.

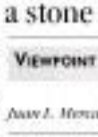
The war on smuggling has many fronts and winning it requires a concerted effort among individuals and agencies, private and public. For instance, one big source of revenue losses is underevaluation of imports, which is often done by importers with the full cooperation of the manufacturers. Under the transaction value system adopted by the World Trade Organization and approved by Congress, customs officials can use the value declared in the port of origin as the basis for assessing the tariff to be imposed on imports. Thus, sheets made in China and declared to cost only 10 cents to 50 cents a pair can be sold in the Philippines after payment of ridiculously low duties. Clearly there is need to re-examine this system that only enriches the importers and their willing partners in the customs bureau.

And what about the politicians who meddle with affairs of the bureau? It is no secret that influential politicians go out of their way to push for the appointments of their protégés to the juicier positions. There have also been cases when powerful politicians intervened for the release of certain imports, including luxury vehicles that were grossly undervalued to avoid payment of the correct duties. Will the famous pet dogs on the list and will Malacañang pressure them to be released?

Bunye has said that "big-time smugglers will not only be identified and prosecuted, they will be brought to jail." The whole nation waits with bated breath.

Not a stone upon a stone

VIEWPOINT



Juan L. Mercado

FROM HER action-filled car retrieval, former Election Commissioner Luz Ilanda Tamayo wields a device defend the indefensible. In an affidavit she submitted to the Senate blue ribbon committee, Tamayo warned that Hagedorn's counting machines for the May elections were best for the polls. She also lashed the National Movement for Free Elections which sought her removal. Its accomplices, Tamayo said, blundered into Commission chaired by Benjamin Abalos Sr. Hagedorn's new machines were Tamayo's.

Is the lady sour-puss? Or is she looking on our short memories? We must, however, consider the Supreme Court's 9-3-2 vote last January that scrapped the Hagedorn deal.

The Court's majority opinion "vulnerable to election fraud by means of just a few key strokes." (See 351 page Court decision cited). The Comelec subsequent 2003,167,007 for flawed computers. Just bug in the hitching robot.

The illegal, imprudent and hasty action of the commissioners, described legal and logical administrative nonsense," the Court pointed out. The Comelec's stampede to buy the Hagedorn automatic machines "can not no doubt upon the poll body's ability and capacity to conduct automated elections."

The Court ordered Dedicadorian Marcos Mercado to recover the cash. He's also to "immediately file criminal liability of those involved."

Does Tamayo remember? Surely, she'll recall that the Supreme Court chastised a Pe-Ti Lhuillier consumer outfit. Pharmakon Marketing Corp. Tamayo revealed this year earlier her brother-in-law, Election Supervision and Information Technology.

The Comelec signed although it had only 1,000 board it is connecting with state-focus and seven stadium economic engines. The crisis stalking the country in the face, they said, was not really a fiscal or financial one. It was civil-one. Specifically it had to do with hunger. What was aided The figures were shocking, and that were many more likely to happen over the next several months. It wasn't just that the funds would go hungry, it was that the people would go hungry.

Well, the papers have just swallowed what they've known all that time. The good news is that hunger reached its highest peak not during GMA's term but Erap's, or shortly after Erap's. That was in March, 2001, a couple of months after Erap was overthrown, when the incidence of hunger reached 16.1 percent. Though that happened to GMA's time, we may safely conclude it was still the product of Erap's mismanagement, a weighty mess for the mess he made of this country.

The bad news is that the second highest incidence of hunger happened during GMA's time. The next worse news is that it happened two months into GMA's second term. Hunger was upon us. It did so on praise be second, putting food and other necessities beyond reach of the poor. I did say to a previous column that I have first-hand knowledge of it, having to buy and from the stores once as by my lunch. The cost of eggs and Bagoong—see, the latter is part of my meals—has climbed since the last month. While I personally have not gone hungry, I am fixed just to make ends meet.

It is a hard lesson why prices have risen dramatically over the last couple of months. I won't about to waste on. The final of election spending GMA embarked to win a second term even bound to make it so. That was exactly what happened three months ago when Macros spent a lot now to get reelected. Three months after he won a second term, prices soared and the peso plunged. A development that spawned the reviews video that came to be called In Plan Quarter Storm of 1970. Unsurprisingly, GMA re-shuffles is following close patterns more and more. Prices have gone up, and only a couple of months ago, the peso careened over the edge and fell. In other words, we are only guests.

But it is, however, no longer, as rumored the operators of its becoming even more economical, is not the real crisis. The real crisis is that this hunger is happening alongside the GMA administration's profligacy. It is the sheer contrast between a people going hungry and government going inland that makes for a social volcano, ready to erupt with terrifying force. Hunger is just the magma in the bowels of the volcano, government's indifference to it is the force fueling it. But life still doesn't resemble the west of Hanover around presidential room in all, it resembles the bewilder of Versailles before the French Revolution. Its fabled inscription has a ring of irony.

You can't find closure panel of GMA's profligacy. I bet that she borrowed more than Fidel Ramos and Erap combined did in eight years, and has nothing to show for it. Hunger is people going hungry. And if that isn't proof enough, the supplies, something more telltale is the number of new swanking Presidential Cars. The government official who likes to buy paintings, in the OSG, and appointing Simeon Rivilla, the ex-movie star and ex-senator who contributed to country only when he became so in both respects, to the Public Estates Authority.

Exhibit C will unfold tomorrow as the fellow who spoke before the showing of Fidel Castro's and Ryan Cayabyab's opera in exile, Juan Luna last year. He talked interminably, defending the $187 controversial purchase of Juan Luna's "Parisian Life" from Christie's, sparking a spasm of coughing from his audience. The coughing rendered 'epidemic proportions,' putting some even on the verge of throwing up, but the fellow never got the hint. He is not going to resign from the GSIS out of deference.

I did say during the campaign that GMA was by no means the "lesser evil." And that Gerry is afraid now is showing. She couldn't succeed, for the purpose I said that someone was of people's money to campaign "you can't nothing but huge billboards of GMA grinning at the world from Ayala to Jolo. In crop-the "greater evil" of TRC winning was bound to produce a freak monumental evil, the likes of which we have never known before." Time to happening even as we speak' armed with an apparent mandate (apparent because most Filipinos, if Boss and Shrek are right, do not think GMA won the election), GMA sees regards the presidency as an entitlement rather than an obligation.

The contrast between a people going hungry and a government going blind has produced a nasty consequence of late. That is the rash of crimes. It is not merely the quantity of it, though that is startling enough in itself. It is the quality of it, or the boldness with which criminals are playing their trade. That is the other thing that reminds me of the twilight years of martial law. That was how things were in 1984 and 1985, when banks were robbing banks like the days of the old American West.

The members of a Cebu business exporter and a Cebu network realtor testify to the growing problem. That is only partly explained by the economic and financial issues for cell phones. It is explained also by the criminals' newfound sense of freedom. The boldness with which they are playing their cards you see in the way they are holding up execution, particularly the open nasty holdup of the unbelievable. One of such is the robbing plaza, the Pavilion restaurant along Timog Avenue, was held up this way some weeks ago. Diners were relieved of their wallets and cell phones. Thankfully, no one died. Enough one was shot in the leg for resisting. Diners for their appetites after a meal.

That's another way of going hungry.

"The key element that saved the 2004 (electoral) process from becoming a disaster were the career officers and, above all, election officials at the precinct level," says a couple and former Comelec chair, Christian Monsod. "The vast majority did their jobs well, despite the unnecessary burden of poor leadership."

It's said that a weakened President means commitments rules are neglected, competition ineffectual, demand suggested.

There is possible. It's not about before. We've had commissioners gifted with insight, skills and hardwork in the past. Among them were the late Rodolfo Bengzon Jr., now Supreme Court Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr., the PCGG's Border Reyes, Ramon Felipe and Harriet Demetriou.

Despite all odds, they removed the ballot re-flected the people's will. Their work resulted in political stability that today, we have the most feeble Comelec we've had since the puppet Batasan dictatorship.

The only solution might to decentralize the Comelec's operations. This would free career officials from hobbles clamped on by incompetent commissioners. That's for a start.

The integrity of Comelec hinges inalienably on the removal of democratic governance itself. Which is her solution, President Macapagal-Arroyo was gifted by almost five years of silences with a rare second chance to repair the damage she inflicted on a vital democratic cornerstone.

"Her window of opportunity will not come again," we wrote then. The President accepted that hope and second chance" by reappointing two personally partisan election commissioners: Virgilio Garcillano and Manuel Barcelona.

"You did not know the time of your visitation, "the Christian Bible Gospel said in that most poignant of reproaches. But did the President respect the second part of that scholar: to you, "not a stone will be left upon stone"?

Hungry

THERE'S THE RUB

Gaynard de Quiroz

E-mail: ...

Local gov'ts should lead in planting for subsistence

THE GOVERNMENT'S decision to issue food coupons to a number of shivering hungry among the ranks may pose a moral hazard. But many fear that the weapon could end up in the hands of politicians who will distribute them to their followers, thereby turning the coupons into a gigantic vote buy. We've seen this happen many times in the past, e.g., with the Pinatubo relief funds.

That hunger stalks the land in teeming seventy million Filipinos is not new. Before the 2001 surge in the seven-ago when Erap Estrada, the unrepentant bachelor high school dropout in El Nido, first let very poor families in metro Manila, was now some of the young students would faint in the mornings. It was then discovered eventually that some kids were coming to school without eating breakfast, and when asked why, they said it was too much time to eat. The problem disappeared after Erap's first year's feeding program involving the gateway biscuits.

* * *

Sen. Juan Flavier quickly blamed the rising hunger incidence on the population problem. It was true, he said, that in Metro Manila, which is frighteningly overcrowded, but this is not true in Mindanao, despite who has traveled to this area knows that the vast areas of land there are still virtually empty. In fact, this is true in most of the country's rural areas, as I noted during a recent trip to Cotabato.

Business leader Sergio Ortiz Luis has rightly suggested that the president start the ball rolling by cooperating populations, but the poor distribution of resources. He opined that we need to disperse people away from the slums of Metro Manila, where they suffer hunger and joblessness, to the rural areas. This may be the best way to solve up industries in these places. This requires, however, among other things, a stable peace and order condition, which still has to be realized in many areas of Mindanao. Which is why we welcome the assistance of Malaysia in working out existing peace there.

* * *

In this country where the soil is so fertile that any plant one stake into it will grow and there is so much land, it's a crime for people to go hungry. Going hungry in the midst of unbelievable, as there is hardly any place in plant, less even in the cities there are still many vacant lots where people can plant for their daily sustenance until the farmers, following Joma, Amgilong and various vegetables. Here is in the midlands. To go into the Mindanao is overkill.

The local governments should relaunch a new "green revolution" as the campaign load, with the battle cry, "Gym hunger" in city homes, even green municipalities. Mayors, town mayors, barangay heads, and even governors, should lead in planting vegetables in their backyards, in vacant lots, in parks, in roadsides. To get them started, the national government

OWWA omnibus policies unjust

MIGRANTE International decries the Arroyo administration's brave attempt to blast on the overseas Filipino workers the burdens of the financial ills.

For a nation ravaging from human rights violations and suffering from rita administration's gross criminal neglect of their plight, neither, nor cause, it can honestly say and pretend for migrant victims of abuse is not OFW.

This year alone, many jaw-dropping human rights violations have been committed against migrant workers. Three Filipina domestic workers allegedly fell to their deaths in Lebanon within a three-month period. More than 3,000 OFWs, including 50 seafarers, infants and other minors, are languishing in foreign prisons. Around 100 maltreated OFWs are "stranded," and living like sardines in an OWWA dirty shelter in Jarmah; and, of course, there was Angelo in the Cave.

But instead of affirming a commitment to strengthen its programs for OFWs, the administration has dared to float proposals to cut from the ranks of working-class paid to services for migrants, a committee to implement the anti-migrant omnibus policies passed last Sept. 18, 2003 by the board of trustees headed by Labor Secretary Patchia Sto. Tomas of the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration, amid a shroud of secrecy. They were crafted without genuine inputs from migrant workers, and have resulted in the dismantlement/demise of countless OFWs and their families—even though the under OWWA budget comes from the pockets of OFWs through the forced $25-membership fee.

The omnibus policies institutionalize the enforcement of rips for from OFWs (instead of employers) and they force "voluntary bonding" to those with "active contracts." Their implementation also signaled the loss of some services, like repatriation for migrants in distress, assistance to those with mental illness, and the suspension of OWWA General Financial Assistance Program.

The omnibus policies mainline President Macapagal-Arroyo's criminal regime of migrants and their families. The setup is worse than a "user-pay system" because even if the OFWs had paid the membership fee, there is no guarantee they will get the benefits or services due them—many which an OFW's contract is terminated, he/she is no longer considered as OWWA member.

We therefore demand: Scrap the OWWA omnibus policies! Scrap the Sto. Tomas! No to the DFA! Stop the OFW-bashing! Stop the OFW sacrifices! Give us our measures! Justice for all migrants and their families!

—RAZUL RAYMAN,
secretary general,
Migrante International,
69 Malumanay cor. Maginhawa Sts.,
UP Village, Quezon City

Education for voters

I FULLY agree with Justice Isagani Cruz in his Aug. 23 column, "When will we grow up?" especially when he stated that "the most virgin debate of Philippine democracy is the simplicity of the electorate."

I still recall that time I was the grand knight of the Knights of Columbus, Council 9420, when we put up billboards urging the electorate, "Go out and vote," "Wag Mandy," "You deserve the government of which you elect her."

I wish to suggest the following to raise the quality of elections in our country:

1. Since officials and employees of the Commission on Elections have practically nothing to do after every election, they should engage in a massive and meaningful voter-education campaign to raise the level of our electorate.

2. The Comelec should get the cooperation and support of non-government organizations like the Jaycees, Rotarians, Lions, church organizations, etc., which I believe are more than willing to help and assist in this undertaking.

3. Require all Comelec registrars to hold a "candidates' forum" in their respective areas of responsibility before every election.

4. Enlist the cooperation and support of the Department of Education in the educational information campaign for honest, clean and peaceful elections.

5. Return to the two-party system.

6. Enforce to the hilt the election laws.

—FERNANDO L. HACHUEL,
Ilawod, Numancia,
Aklan

Going back to one's country

THIS is in reaction to your editorial, "Unsent," of Sept. 23.

Several years ago, while working and living in Jakarta, I learned of a multinational group that was keeping statistics of Indonesians who had gone to the United States and Europe but returned to settle, work and contribute here. The "returnee rate" was 90 percent! The majority of those who were asked about their reasons for going back to Indonesia simply expressed their love and preference for country, or their native land and town.

I have no doubt that this interest or influence to the motherland, coupled with their country's newfound democracy, will help Indonesians propel their country to even greater heights.

—PERLA URBIZA MESSAPEL,
4875 Palma St., Poblacion, Makati City

Napocor: Let truth be told

WE wish to clarify the following:

The request of National Power Corporation and chief executive officer Rogelio M. Murga, which was only granted by President Macapagal-Arroyo last Sept. 15, was to retire the incumbent resigned and not be asked to resign. Murga first expressed to the President that desire to retire last May, before June 30 when all department secretaries, heads of agencies and top government officials were requested to tender their resignations. His reasons: he wants to spend more time with his family.

Murga will be leaving behind a legacy of reforms that will have great impact in the overall operations of Napocor. These include programs to increase and further improve efficiency, lowering costs and streamlining operations. The President has requested Murga to finish these programs before he goes out of Napocor. Her order is very explicit. His retirement is effective Sept. 15, 2004, which means he has still three months in government service.

Napocor has announced time and again that it has been suffering from operational losses due to its artificially low rates, the high level of subsidy it provides to its customers across grids, and inadequate electrification, among others.

Napocor has one experienced point of interconnection in its operations. These interventions have great impact on our rates, especially in our collection of payments from delinquent customers.

Napocor's problems cannot be, and should not be, limited to one person or entity. The financial difficulties it has been experiencing are across several administrations. In all the debates on Napocor's debts, what has been ignored is the fact that policies are not formulated in and by Napocor. This runs counter to the Electric Power Industry Reform Act.

Additionally, Napocor's fiscal condition bears heavily on the national government's. On this, we wish to reiterate that these are factors beyond our control that contribute to the condition, e.g., market forces and movements. But as to the factors of which we do have control, there we are trying to address now through the Electric Power Industry Reform Act.

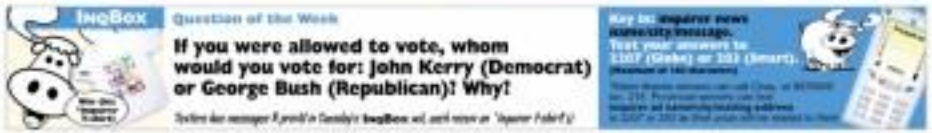
Napocor welcomes all inquiries into our books, by the Senate, House or any other body for that matter. We wish to reassure the public that as a government-owned and -controlled corporation, Napocor is subject to the scrutiny of all government auditing and regulatory bodies.

What we are requesting from the media is an objective reporting and discussion of Napocor issues, devoid of any editorializing and sensationalism. After all, we share the same objective, that is, for the truth to be told.

—DENNIS S. EANG,
manager,
Corporate Communications,
National Power Corp.,
cor. Quezon Avenue and Agham Road,
Diliman, Quezon City

If you have any complaint, grievance or suggestion about the treatment of news and photos by the Inquirer, you may write to the Readers' Advocate, Philippine Daily Inquirer, Chino Roces Avenue, corner Yupa and Masaredo Streets, City of Makati; or send a fax to this, 897-8703, 897-8794, or e-mail readersadvocate@inquirer.com.ph.

All sorts of letters to the editor are requested to include their complete address and telephone or pager number or e-mail address for verification purposes. The letter will not published any letter unless such information is supplied.



what watch

THE PODIUM
1 SHARK'S TALE
2 MINDLESS

Movies are subject to change without prior notice. For complete movie schedule, visit www.smcinema.com

Eiga Sai 2004: Japanese Contemporary Films
Now Showing
SM Megamall Cinema 6

FREE ADMISSION

Actress/singer still hooked on drugs

DOLLY WOOD

Dolly Ann Carvajal

IT SEEMED me to have that the very post of Britney Spears is back to her old ways. Did she ever really try to change at all?

My most sad and late shocking anecdotes about the actress, like the time the actress requested a friend to hand-cuff a video tape to her forehead and it turned out drugs were hidden in the tape. The actress would also have got intimate with her boyfriend and lap her-in garment. Was she that blindly in love or did the drugs make her lose her sense of decency?

Well assuming friends have helped the actress make a comeback. For a while, she clicks again but she can't really keep momentum. Soon enough, she slips back to her drug dependency. Having her younger years, it could have been explained but now that she's already a veteran in show biz, it's appalling that she's still at it.

Recently she had a successful concert in one abroad. Her manager thought that had a good thing going until the actress got her hand from you-know-what in the US or they could enjoy their own regards, or. The earnings they made from the concert are more down the drain. The actress besides parades on her boyfriend but does not even give a single centavo to her kids.

The helpless manager flew back to Manila while the actress opted to stay on in the US until her term.

I wonder what it would take for the actress/singer to finally come to her senses? Is she already totally under professional help. Her drug problem has been dragging on for too long. I can almost see my self shaking her head and saying, "It's ... whatever. If it's not my problem, who will?

GMA Network

PHOTO

"Glad Dolly Ann,

"The effort to woo others in the Philippine Daily Inquirer on page 7, 2004.

We have deep respect for your market and admiration for the legacy as the Philippine entertainment industry. For the contribution to our network, we are very grateful. In that light, we also believe that for as many years to see footage from your readers above and post on archive movie material.

"It is for this reason that GMA Network Inc. exercised its legal rights to ... for copyright infringement for the fi...

MMTA
METRO MANILA THEATERS ASSOCIATION
MOVIE GUIDE
NOW SHOWING

CINEPLEX
FESTIVAL CINEMA
HARWOOD CINEMAS
MALL CINEPLEX
Cinema 2000 Taytay Mall
Cinema 2000 Muntinlupa
Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall
Cinema 2000 Cainta
Cinema 2000 Molinabaya
Cinema 2000 Valenzuela
Liana Cinema
Liana WaveCity
Mega Center Mall
Finda World Mall
Cinema Plaza Cinema
METROPOLIS
st. mall Movies

MOVIES / SCHEDULES / PRICES SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

Across the NATION

DOLE says 'industrial peace' reigns

CALAMBA CITY—As the country plunged into a deeper economic crisis, trade unions in special economic zones in the Calabarzon (Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal and Quezon) region have become "more mature and responsible," which resulted in fewer strikes in the past years, a labor regional official said yesterday.

According to Antonio Lim, Department of Labor and Employment Calabarzon director, both organized and independent unions in the region had come to grips with the effects of the sagging economy on businesses and the dislocations and the dislocations and the employment it entails.

"Despite the fact that Calabarzon is home to organized and militant labor groups, they are now working in partnership with their employers to maintain industrial peace in the region," Lim said.

He added: "That explains why Calabarzon is region free of strikes or labor strife figures for this year."

He said from nine "reported actual strikes" during the first eight months last year, there were only three strikes in the same period this year.

Unlike labor practice and dialogue as collective bargaining agreements were among the reasons for the strikes, he said.

There are now increasing responsible, they no longer resort to violence in staging strikes. What is important to organized labor now is job security and protection. The workers now prefer to talk with their employers on how to increase the productivity and profitability of the company

Actress/singer...

Philippine Daily Inquirer, Thursday, October 7, 2004, page A17

legal son of the 'Ere to Eye' Vhilo Ivi Olanga exclusive interview on GMA Network is the daily registered copyright owner of 'Eye to Eye'.

"Sincerely yours,

"Butch Raquel, OIC, Corporate Communications. (Ehh. Hot word ito.)"

... I rest my case then. What irked my brother, sister and me was that they didn't even bother to mention one word's name in the height of the controversy. It couldn't be just a piece of paper, GMA 7 can take all the credit for 'Eye to Eye' if that's the way they want it. The impact my mom left on all her followers is more binding to the heart.

Gail at the Big Dome

AFTER a series of shows in more younger and bars (here and five weeks, Gail Blanco will perform in a bigger venue—in one of the giant arenas in the Kiss 1 Dome. Basil Valdez concert "The Star Sa Silver" at the Big Dome tomorrow night.

'Tabanang Pinoy'

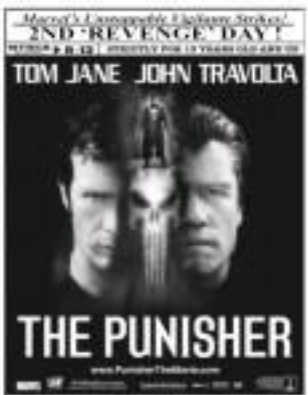
THE LONG KEPT MIMI Iconic lifestyle show on ABC-5, "Tabanang Pinoy," is now shown nationwide.

"Tabanang Pinoy" features a comprehensive coverage of the hunting situation in the country as well as various topics related to the search for one's true root. "Tabanang Pinoy" and to the upkeep and maintenance of the Filipino home.

This October, the show will also be aired over the Mabuhay Cable Network all over the United States. "Tabanang Pinoy" airs Sunday mornings at 11 a.m. on ABC.

"Tabanang Pinoy" is produced by Sybille Weiss Productions (sybille-weiss@skynet.net).

For feedback, e-mail mimi_tipsch@yahoo.com or dolfcorn@salesh-land.com



INQUIRER Southern Luzon
Editor Jun Bautista
Bureau Chief Florante G. Solmirano

Travails of Banahaw's rehabilitation

By Emilio T. Mabini Jr.
Lucena City

LAST March, when members of the Protected Area Management Board (PAMB) and environmentalists sealed off several trails leading to the bosom of Mount Banahaw, most of the participants knew they were facing a daunting task ahead.

They were starting a five-year rehabilitation program that would restore the mountain's natural resources.

The banning of activities inside the protected area apparently to be more challenging. "Unsustainable and destructive livelihood activities have endangered several endemic flora and fauna and caused the extinction of others. Tracts of forest lands have been converted into agricultural use. We also adopt inappropriate technologies which are dependent on expensive fertilizers and pesticides," said the PAMB in its management plan for the Banahaw and San Cristobal mountains.

"Kaingin" (slash and burn) farming has not only left a lamentable mark on the mountains' surface but also now makes its toll on the fragile watershed, resulting in the drying up of the mountain's springs, falls and other traditional water sources for residents below.

Rod Lotus, chief of the Sariaya Watersheds Service, said there has been an extreme shortage in the town's water supply during the past years.

"One of the main springs in Mt. Banahaw that serve us gave water providers only a trickle, only 12 liters per second," he told the Inquirer.

Sariaya town lies on the slope of the mountain.

Sariaya Councilor Alex Tolentino, likewise, has on the "kaingin issue."

Illegal farming

Sally Pangan, provincial area supervisor assigned by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources to oversee the Banahaw-San Cristobal protected area, said the situation in the area between Barangays Sampaloc I and Bagong in Sariaya was due to rampant illegal farming in the mountains. She noted that the land in the area has become tapped.

A video by Tanggol Kalikasan Anselmo Tagaling, chanced Lope Balderas, village chief of Bagong, pointing to the land that he said "has been tilled for a long time and is no longer fertile, it's [been] bombarded with chemical fertilizers."

The effects of soil erosion, from the water source downstream, indicates a mismanaged watershed, Pangan said.

In Dolores town, municipal environment and natural resources officer Manny Calitong also complained of the effects of the kaingin farming being practiced by Mt. Banahaw settlers.

He said the town has also been experiencing severe water shortage. The town gets its water supply from falls and springs from Mt. Banahaw.

"Even our Agos River where I used to swim during my childhood is now dry," Calayag said.

Rich water

Ironically, Mt. Banahaw has been known as "Makiat de Agua" (water volcano). Streets from Quezon the mountain's Bulacnin, Mulanlay, Lilio, Buhilawan, Malitlican, Magdalena and Victoria Dingin.

The rivers systems that sunders around mountain Banahaw and San Cristobal provides water for domestic, irrigation and recreational purposes. Some rivers like the Kinabuhayan River in Dolores are used as lifelines for have "medicinal and healing powers."

Aside from crystal-clear rivers, Mt. Banahaw also counts with falls like Sta. Lucia, Sapatia and Kinabuhayan falls, which are found in Dolores, the same town known as the gate for religious pilgrims during Holy Week.

The provincial prohibition brought by the presence of several religious groups inside the protected area could also occasionally.

In July, PAMB officials led by Barjan stopped an illegal construction within the "Twelve Big Oval Stone" inside the protected area where the previously constructed structures of the Supreme de la Iglesia de la Ciudad Mistica de Dios were built in 1998.

Several members of the influential religious sect were arrested and are facing charges in court.

But despite all the senseless discoveries and unfortunates preceding events after the arrests, an environmentalist group declared the mountain's temporarily safe and the ongoing rehabilitation efforts as a "must-be-a-dwell-of-hope" for all the stakeholders.

"We're now slowly making our way to achieve the sustainable rehabilitation of Mt. Banahaw as there would always be instead of challenges along the road but we are firm in our resolve to make it through," said Jay Litt, program officer for Mt. Banahaw and watershed project of Tanggol Kalikasan. Southern Tagalog, a public interest legal defense center for the environment based in Quezon and one of the prime movers in the rehabilitation of the mountain.

Rehab efforts

The Tanggol Kalikasan ng Timog Katimugan (LAKAS), a nongovernment organization advocating for community-based protection and sustainable natural resource management for the mountain, has created a three-dimensional model of the mountain complex.

The model has been used for the following activities: redefinition of the boundary of the national park, community-based land use planning, formation of village groups to monitor the protected area, conduct of awareness and preparation of zoning/legislation for forest management.

The LAKAS recently disclosed a reforestation of the mountains in BM City Lucena to endow its ever-years among shoppers.

The events also served as the kick-off for the organization's "Ka-Ling" campaign to generate support for the mountain rehabilitation efforts.

"Ka" refers to "kalikasan" (environment), while "Ling," Tagalog for beloved, means to develop "team mountain relationship" that would environmentally sustain mutual protection.

"This campaign institutes a symbiotic relationship they can't live without one another. It has to be mutually protected that way," Jun Lumicao, LAKAS president, explained.

Rep. Proceso Alcala, the area representative in Cavite and Quezon's second legislative district, was instrumental in the rehabilitation of Banahaw and San Cristobal mountains is one of the top priorities of his administration.

"We have to intensively attend to the fragile ecosystem of Banahaw's watersheds. They ought to be in top priority of the attention in all denuded portions of the mountains," he said.

The lawmaker now maintains a nursery of indigenous species of local trees, which will supply future tree planting activities.

Last month, employees of Meralco, a communications firm, planted three seeds of indigenous tree species in the fast two side of Mt. Banahaw.

Lim has noted that one of the students' extra curricular activities is tree planting in the denuded portion of the mountain.

Alcala, together with three other Quezon lawmakers, has re-filed a bill in Congress that would establish Mount Banahaw and San Cristobal as a "protected landscape."

When Congress resumes session, we will make an "extensive display" to Banahaw that would show the property residents [of] Mt. Banahaw and Mt. San Cristobal. With that, we hope that we will get the support of Congress to any rehabilitation efforts and programs," Alcala said.

Protected area

Mounts Banahaw and San Cristobal were proclaimed as protected areas on June 25, 2003 through Presidential Proclamation No. 411. The area has a total of 10,130.00 hectares and covers nine municipalities and one city in Laguna and Quezon.

Alcala called on all mountain-based migrants to help restore the area by planting forest and fruit-bearing trees on denuded mountains.

"There should be an alternative livelihood and income-generating methods for the upland farmers," he said, adding that he had already coordinated with various government agencies to address the issue.

Cecilio Gascon, Ph.D., president of Southern Luzon Polytechnic College (SLPC), said the college has detailed three regular forest rangers to monitor the various activities in the mountains.

The rangers also maintain regular consultation and coordination with barangay officials to ensure the active participation of the latter in the conservation programs.

In 1992, a memorandum of agreement was signed between officials of SLPC and the Ministry of Natural Resources, giving the former the organization and possession of more than 1,000 hectares of Mt. Banahaw in Lucban.

"The college has successfully reforested more than 50 hectares of denuded areas of Mt. Banahaw in Lucban," Gascon said.

The SLPC encourages the participation of other government agencies, local institutions, academic groups and private corporations in the reforestation of Mt. Banahaw.

Gascon said SLPC maintains a policy of allowing visitors to go on peak season only when accompanied by a forest ranger.

"The rangers ensure that no garbage is left in the peak or along the trail of the mountain," she said.

Mt. Banahaw advocates have also expressed alarm that mountain operations and ecotypists are more threatened today due to man's activities.

They called for the regulation in the gathering of orchids, ferns and medicinal and plant collection within the park.

They also urged for the establishment of sanctuaries and implementation of close seasons for hunting and trapping, prohibition of trade and promotion of products from the most endangered selected species.

In May, a team of American and Filipino botanists discovered a new species of rodent-like mammal with a bright orange color in Mt. Banahaw.

Dr. Lawrence Heaney of the Field Museum of Natural History in the University of Chicago and author of the book "Philippine Biodiversity: Assessment and Management," said the animal is one of the same species that can be seen anywhere else in the world.

But sadly, Tanggol Kalikasan also reported in the area several endangered species, mostly eagles from the wilds of Banahaw, to the confines of their homes.

Some of these live in cages, are weak and dying. These brutalities should stop," Lim said.

ENVIRONMENTALISTS look at the deforestation effect of landslide caused by generations of "slash-and-burn" farming in the mountain villages of Bagong and Sampaloc I in Sariaya, Quezon. (COURTESY OF TANGGOL KALIKASAN)

STUDENTS from St. Francis Academy in Sariaya help plant indigenous tree species in Bagong as their contribution to the rehabilitation of Mt. Banahaw. (COURTESY OF TANGGOL KALIKASAN)

MT. BANAHAW (left peak) and Mt. San Cristobal (right peak) loom in the horizon. (ALVIN O. VILLALON)

Vet administers 'euthanasia' to eagle

INSTEAD of letting Aslan continuously suffer from terrible pain, a government veterinarian opted to give him an injection for his final journey, leaving behind an environmental group saddened but with a firm resolve to prevent the re-peat of a similar story.

Twenty-six hours after the nationally endangered Aslan, an adult Philippine Eagle, finally found in a village at the foot of Mt. Banahaw where he got his name, the veterinarian at the Center for Philippine Raptors at the University of the Philippines at Los Baños (UPLB) campus in Laguna, citing overwhelming differences over the raptor's worsening condition, decided to resort to euthanasia.

"The poor eagle was a victim of man's cruelty," lamented Jay Litt, coordinator of Tanggol Kalikasan, a public interest environmental law office based here.

The Crested or Changeable Hawk-Eagle, which has a natural habitat, crested black and a long flexible black crest, is found in India, Ceylon and tropical subcontinental Asia east to Indonesia and the Philippines.

It is listed as endangered species under the Convention on International Trade of Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora.

At around 11 a.m., Sept. 30, farmer Rolando Colmenares recovered the raptor near their house in Barangay Bubong Aslan, in Tayabas, Quezon in the foot of Mt. Banahaw.

"The bird suddenly fell from a tree. He was so weak due to several wounds in his body," Colmenares told Litt in a telephone conversation made by Tanggol Kalikasan.

Sensing that it was not an ordinary bird, the farmer immediately reported the matter to the authorities. "Because that's what I often heard over the radio: a citizen should always report the matter to the authorities, especially in cases like this," he added.

When informed of the farmer's finding, Romy Cariaga, the Tayabas environment and natural resources officer, immediately contacted the Tanggol Kalikasan's office and reported the discovery.

Without delay, the group, including Colmenares, transported the eagle to the Center for Philippine Raptors.

The center's veterinarian, Dr. Jo. Santos de los Santos, immediately established to the frail adult eagle that weighed a little less than 4 kilo.

He found a broken bone on the right leg of the bird and fractures wounds on the left side of the bird's shoulder.

"The doctor suspected that Aslan's previous wounds were caused by gunshots apparently from hunters," Litt said.

The Chiropodite Hawk-Eagle's jaw-dented, lacerated wounds seemed infected, inflicted land with ticks, maggots and worse wounds and were found infested with ticks, maggots and worse wounds and were found infested with ticks, maggots and worse wounds and were found infested

Makati fetes top senior citizens

By Margaux C. Ortiz

MORE than a hundred years in the making finally came to an end as Makati City government officials and employees joined the city's oldest living residents as part of its Senior Citizen's Week celebration.

The city government also paid tribute to Lorenzo and Candida Beltran as the longest married living couple, and Alfredo del Rosario Sr. and Clara Cristina Navarro as the most productive grandparents.

Despite his age, Beltran still enjoys reading whatever he could lay his hands on, according to his youngest daughter, Delia Beltran.

"He still likes to go around the house, expressing his desire to do things," Bella said in an interview.

But the secret her father loved talking to people, and only stopped speaking when his 97-year-old wife Concordia died last April. "He was devastated when she [married at my mother's death]," Beltran said. "He loved her very much."

Beltran and his wife, who were blessed with nine children, were last year on the oldest married couple.

Before could her father, a former chief labor court in his younger days, refuses to indulge in any kind of vice.

"He loved eating fish and vegetables and spent his free time growing involved in sports like boxing and track and field," Delia said.

Beltran also said her father's ancestors had also lived long lives.

Beltran, a native of Cebu, dropped out of school in 1932. He now lives with Bella on on Magnolia St., Barangay Bel-Air.

Former Supreme Court dominee Justice Lorenzo Relova and his wife Candida also celebrated the city's longest married couple, with 63 years and 11 months of "blissful marriage."

"We met in the same small town of Pila, Laguna," Relova said. "I'm proud to say that I never regretted having been married to this beautiful woman for 64 years."

Candida said the careers of their marriage was involving Dad in their marriage.

"We always go to Boljoy Mass every morning," Candida said. "That has helped us get through every obstacle we have."

Last to be honored was Del Rosario, 84, as the city's "most productive grandfather" with 13 children, 30 grandchildren, 36 great grandchildren and one great great grandchild.

Del Rosario, a native of Gapan, Nueva Ecija, said he had always wanted to have many children.

"I have always been a big fan of big, happy families," Del Rosario said, grinning. He he added that he discouraged his children to do the same.

"Times are hard and they could take care of their children better if they practice birth control," Del Rosario said.

The awardees received P5,000 cash rewards and certificates during a ceremony held at the Makati City Hall.

MAKATI Mayor Jejomar Binay (right) with this year's awardees (from left) former Supreme Court Associate justice Lorenzo Relova and wife Candida, Jose Beltran and Alfredo del Rosario.

Lax policy on Metro billboards rapped

By Margaux C. Ortiz

THE LACK of proper regulation has paved the way for indiscriminate installation of billboards in the metropolis, according to the head of an advertising association.

Jun Perez, president of the Outdoor Advertising Association of the Philippines (OAAP), said their group has encountered problems with unscrupulous advertisers who put up structurally unsafe billboards in road rights-of-ways.

The Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) had earlier declared that those billboards pose dangers to motorists because they compete with road signs.

"Our association has been receiving lots of complaints from concerned citizens and motorists about those billboards," Perez said in a media forum hosted by the Advertising Board of the Philippines yesterday in Makati City.

Perez said that even if there is no law that ensures the importance of public safety, "many businessmen continued to defy advisory regulations."

"They are only concerned with getting permits from the local government units. Perhaps," he said, adding that those advertisers outnumber the 70 members of their association.

Perez said there are more than a hundred advertisers who are not members of the OAAP.

The OAAP president cited as an example the billboard which collapsed in Pasig City and destroyed 15 houses last August.

"The advertiser was not an OAAP member," Perez said, stressing they are finding it hard to control said nonmembers.

MMDA Chair Bayani Fernando, on the other hand, also noted that many billboards in the metropolis were structurally unsafe.

"If I was a structural engineer, I would not approve any of the installation of those billboards," Fernando said.

He added most advertisers used flimsy materials which collapse during typhoons.

Perez said that their association has prohibited their members from putting up billboards in the road rights-of-way.

"Unfortunately, we are losing business to nonmembers because they could put up their structures wherever they want," Perez said.

He appealed to the LGUs to strictly implement the provisions of the National Building Code and Sign Code and the implementation of barriers to check by issuing permits to deserving ones.

"We are continuously consulting the LGUs and furnishing them with copies of our regulations and code of ethics," Perez said.

Fernando also asked the advertising associations to submit specifications and drawings of billboards that can be adopted by the MMDA and the LGUs.

"This is your trade and you know more about it than anyone else," Fernando told the advertisers during the forum.

He said the regulations could include appropriate sizes, structural specifications and massage contents of billboards.

MetroBriefs

Loans restricted

POLICEMEN in Manila City have been advised to restrict their borrowings only from accredited lenders, Sr. Supt. Felipe Rojas Jr., city police chief, said they issued the restriction after learning that more than half of the members of the city police force only get a take-home salary of only P15,000 a month. Rojas said a cop's regular take-home pay is between P7,000 and P8,000. Much of the pay goes to paying their loans. Rojas said the directive was mostly meant to curb illegal solicitations by corruption. Rojas said they now attend a cop's pay-slip fund before approving the application for a loan. Lenox de Vicente

Grenade seized

A KILLER security guard yesterday presented what could have been an alarming incident when he seized a hand grenade from an alleged cohort of persons near the De La Salle University in Manila. Police said the guard, Jenifer Una, who is assigned at the UP Village clubhouse, saw the man at around 9:30 a.m. shooting pamaypay and approached him. A hand grenade was his prize. Una grabbed it from the man and immediately called the police. The suspect ran away. Police are looking for him. Lenox de Vicente

Girl, 16, charged

A 16-YEAR-OLD girl is now facing charges for allegedly conniving with her boyfriend to kill her mother, whom she accused of abusing her. Today's alleged victim is Rosalinda Pascual and her boyfriend Richard Esquivel were charged with parricide, murder and robbery before the Quezon City Prosecutors Office yesterday. The girl, currently in the custody of the Quezon City Police District Criminal Investigation Unit, while Cruz is now the subject of a police manhunt, investigators said. Police Chief Supt. Leandro Mendoza said Esquivel, armed with at least 40 shot wounds in different parts of the body, made his house in Quezon City on Sept. 28. Believed by his companions, the victim's daughter confessed to her boyfriend the real motive behind the killing. Tina Ramirez

Smokey Mountain folk edgy

By Tarra Y. Quismundo

LIVING in controversy has come to be the norm in the 66-hectare housing estate at the former site of the Smokey Mountain.

"They are very disturbed, and they are having fears on whether they would still be able to remain in the housing estate," said Fr. Beth Belleza, a Couple priest who has seen the struggle of Smokey Mountain residents to have their own homes.

Fate has become uncertain for some 1,000 more families living in the Smokey Mountain residents due to the ongoing construction of the Smokey Mountain Development and Reinstallation Project (SMDRP).

Meanwhile, among the more than 2,000 families who had moved into their new homes scattered in the SMDRP, the uncertainty driven out of their homes lingers.

"This is a fight between politicians and big-time businessmen that has put us at risk, but hope they solve this immediately," said Belleza-Santiago in Filipino. She is community coordinator and convener of building 15, who was among the first to move into the buildings last December.

The SMDRP has come under fire recently as a case seeking to stop the deal between municipal officials and the National Housing Authority is pending at the Supreme Court.

Belleza said that the issue of the SMDRP has come under fire recently as a case seeking to stop the deal between municipal officials and the National Housing Authority is pending at the Supreme Court.

Marikina spreads word...

From page A18

do the same.

"You should have a figure now," she tells a young lady with an infant in her arms. "It's the children that suffer if you have more kids," she adds.

Flanders is the same race with a 10-year-old mother of six. "Since your husband is abroad, this is the best time to have figure," she tells her.

When the issues institution, she goes right to the point. "Don't think twice. You still have many years before menopause. No doubt, you will have more children. Do you want that?" she said.

As the women shake their heads, Ermac puts out a referral form. "You in the health center and be scheduled for ligation," she said. "It's free, and the medicines are free too," she added.

Each time the volunteers stop inside a house, they take it as an opportunity to help a woman, or let her understand how her body works. If the man of the house is receptive, the women try to convince him as well.

In many instances, they extend misconceptions about family planning before they even discuss the methods.

"Some tell us that women who have IUDs become more sexually active and are more likely to cheat on their husbands," so-called Lourdes Santos, another volunteer.

"We explain that sexual appetites has less to do with the IUD, and more with a woman's wants and needs," she said.

Some of these misconceptions run deep, showing how many families are unaware of family planning.

For instance, a number of women — and men — believe the pill's organs inside the IUD's discarding sexual intercourse. As a result, they want the IUDs taken out.

"The IUD is placed in the uterus, far from the vaginal canal," said a health worker, as she points out a sketch of the female reproductive system. "If, male's organ can only go this far," she said, pointing to the end of the canal.

Some believe that pills do not work, get stuck in the stomach, and later cause cancer.

How are such beliefs threatened?

"You have to be patient. You have to listen to them. You have to show you are sincere. In many cases, all it takes is a little explanation," Wijesio said.

"What makes us happy is when those we refer for ligation appear at the health center to find out more about it, scheduled for the procedure," she added.

There are currently 46 million Filipinos, with the figures growing at a rate of 2.36 percent annually. City officials fully understand that whatever economic gains the country achieves would be swallowed by uncontrolled population growth.

"We have the full support of the city government," said Marikina Vice Mayor Romulo Bautista.

Bautista may her office does not mind what the Church has to say on the issue.

"The Church has its own opinions. We have ours. We are simply doing what we think is best for the country," she says.

ONE OF the volunteers makes her rounds. RICKY LOPEZ

Manila vows jobs, not just food, for poor

By Tarra Y. Quismundo

SOCIAL HOUSING, but only is not the answer.

Amid reports that more Filipinos were regular meals daily, the Manila City government would rather help the poor earn a living than give them something to eat.

"It's teaching the man how to fish, not giving him the fish," said Manila Department of Social Welfare (MSDW) chief Jose Bayanda.

Saturday said yesterday that the city would rather help poor Manileños find means of making money, instead of supplying them food vouchers.

The national social welfare department had announced a plan to give food coupons to the poor, after studies showed an increase in the number of Filipinos experiencing hunger.

Bayanda said that such a program might be hard to sustain, as funds may eventually dry up. Trust in Manila, helping the poor make a living, than feeding them in line, has become the primary urban poor program.

Fund assistance

"We are now intensifying capital assistance for the underprivileged. That's how you teach them to be self-reliant," Bayanda said. The MSDW reported that in the remaining week, the city is set to give out capital assistance worth P859,000 to some 238 Manileños.

The city government also provides skills training for the poor, including programs which may lead to employment, livelihood, public business management, and income-generating skills like sewing and cooking.

Bayanda said that simply providing food by the less-privileged might make them accustomed to dependence and content with waiting for the blessing to come.

FX DRIVERS hold a rally at the LTFRB main office in Quezon City. PHOTO BY

FX men protest LTFRB order

From page A20

Magno also objected to the plan to pick up and drop off passengers for the sake of fx-pass.

Other FX operators said the free passenger policy for negotiable would cut their income in half.

Barrios said the government would limit the franchise for the AUV Express to holders of the V-304 franchise currently in limbo.

She said these franchises could be converted into an AUV Express line. Filers registered owners must continue to operate as such.

The LTFRB chair also agreed that there was a demand that the AUVs charge not a per head basis, despite objections from jeepney and bus groups. Bautista said the LTFRB would likely adopt the line scheme of vehicles for hire, which is 50 for the first five kilometers and P1 for every succeeding kilometer. For those schedules are seeking a fare increase of P10 for the first five kilometers and P1.50 for each additional kilometer.

"Vehicles currently classified as for hire were among those that could convert their franchises from an AUV Express, Bingo taxi, on the other hand, are banned from living up as AUV terminals starting Oct. 16. With Lodge del Puerto

EZ2 16 7 SUERTRES 7 3 9 FOUR DIGIT 6 2 7 3

METRO
Metro Editor Canon B. Bito, Exec G. Dipasupil

MEGALOTTO 6/45 4 13 21 41 44 45

FX vs LTFRB order

By Charissa S. Batino

MEMBERS and operators of the AUV (Asian Utility Vehicles) Express, more commonly known as FX, temporarily abandoned their routes for three hours yesterday morning and stopped in the Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board to protest a recent order directing mega taxis or FX vehicles not to run from 6 a.m. to 9 p.m. in Makati, Mandaluyong, Mandaue City and Lapu-Lapu City.

The interruption in service, however, did little to cripple public transport services, at least in eastern Metro Manila, where the users reportedly failed to get the support of many FX drivers.

"There was no strike. FX drivers and operators went to the LTFRB just for a dialogue," clarified Ann Magno, president of the Confederation of FX Operators and Drivers.

"I don't know the exact numbers, but many in our association did not join the move," said Gerry de Guzman, a member of an FX association plying the Cubao-Alabang-Makati route.

LTFRB Chair Mario Rhino Rainiero said FX operators were planning to file a motion for reconsideration today.

If the motion is approved, the body could suspend the new labor order for taxis scheduled for implementation starting Dec. 16.

Taxis had been allowed to charge P40 on flag down, or the first 300 meters. Every succeeding 300 meters would be charged P2.50, from the old rate of P2.

Every two minutes of waiting time would be charged P3.50, or 40 centavos more than the original P2.

Magno said they would ask the LTFRB to reconsider the hike rates order and to allow all FXs to charge per head.

The provision was part of the fare hike order but twice rejected by the LTFRB on Sept. 28.

Rainiero had also announced plans of the transport department to issue an order that would legalize the operations of the AUV Express before Christmas.

The order that would define the existence of the AUV Express would direct the air-conditioned FX to fill out the seats from the terminal and drop off passengers in the end point or another terminal.

This meant the FXs could not pick or drop off passengers outside of the yet to be designated 200 terminals for 200 routes in Metro Manila and nearby provinces.

GO TO PAGE A-13

A FAMILY health educator talks to a mother in Marikina about the merits—illigation as part of a door-to-door family planning campaign. The drive also seeks to correct various misconceptions about methods utilized to promote awareness about the effects of uncontrolled population growth. ROMEO GACAD

Marikina spreads word on family planning

By Luige del Puerto

A CITY in eastern Metro Manila risks censure by the Catholic Church by embarking on an aggressive program on family planning with women residents of depressed areas as primary targets of its campaign.

Seventeen family health coordinators went out today door to find out, among other things, how many women in the city practice contraception, and how many want to practice contraception but do not, for various reasons or motives.

Armed with survey sheets and abundant knowledge about a woman's body, the volunteers, who are paid P12,000 a month for their efforts, are the country's family planning warriors.

One of them is Winnie Cuadros, 39. The 14th of 22 siblings, Winnie knows too well the difficulties of growing up and sharing everything from food, space and clothes with her brothers and sisters. But since her father was a strong supporter with a considerable income, Winnie considers herself luckier than most.

"The rice had to be measured, the food equally divided," she said. When she got married, Winnie vowed to limit the number of her children. She had a figure also in keeping her fourth child in 2000.

Now, Cuadros hates to share her experiences, and how motherhood is

TO PAGE A-11

SPORTS

E-mail: sr_sports@inquirer.com.ph

Editor Teddyboy S. Melendres

NO YOU CAN'T. Rudy Hatfield, Jeffrey Cariaso and Peach Jalalon (from left) of Coca-Cola prop up on Renard Tablist of the Ginebra Tanduay during their game yesterday

One more year with La Salle for Mac /A22

Tiger secretly weds longtime GF /A23

Tigers apply brakes to win

By Jun Navarro

COCA-COLA abandoned its running game in the second half to regulate Shell, 91-83, last night in the Gran Matador PBA Philippine Cup at the Araneta Coliseum.

Coach Chot Reyes realized it was a mistake to...

...paging the Turbochargers in a battle for speed and cooled things down for his Tigers, who responded well in the final half.

"We want to [counter] them and set a fast-paced game, but it turned out to be a mistake. So we did what any good team does by adjusting to the situation," said Reyes.

The Tigers lagged behind, 52-57, in the first period as the Turbochargers masterfully ran their high-velocity offense, racking up 37 fastbreak points while roasting the Tigers' full-court press.

"We thought we're fast enough but they (Turbochargers) proved to be much quicker. This was the first time in my coaching career that my team gave up 37 fastbreak points in a single quarter," said Reyes.

Trailing at the start of the third period, 42-52, the Tigers did everything methodically, throwing a defensive blanket that stymied the rampaging Turbochargers.

With rookie Gary David spearing seven of his 20 points in an 11-0 run, the Tigers finally moved on top at 58-54.

"Gary [David] kept us in the game at a time the veterans were not playing well. I have to credit him for that victory," said Reyes.

Shell, along with Air Chia, Gilbert Lao, Reynel Hugnatan, Leo Avenido and Manny Ramos, had undergone a 12-week conditioning program designed to ably backstop the starters in time of need.

After breaking Shell's momentum, the Tigers seemed to sweep aside their youngest Jeffrey Cariaso, Rudy Hatfield and Ali Mamaro finishing the job.

Cariaso shattered 10 points from fastbreak plays and perimeter jumpers as the Tigers broke the game wide open.

The scores:

COCA-COLA (91)—Seal 25, Cariaso 15, Hatfield 14, Alvarez 12, Yeban 9, Jalalon 6, Avenido 5, Mamaro 3, Hugnatan 2, Lao 2.

SHELL (83)—Yap 15, Wilson 15, Wong 12, Lojera 12, Ahmad 12, Dela Cruz 6, Jaime 4, Co 2, Ong 0, Ramos 0, Chan 0, Ilagan 0, Quinahan 0, Lee 0.

Quarters: 17-25, 42-52, 72-67, 91-83.

Dandan, Narvaez sustain ITF run, grab semifinals

ILOILO (10/06) hopes Kyle Andrea Jandan and Miguel Narvaez downed separate rivals yesterday to reach the boys' singles semifinals in the Philcom Group Powers Foundation International Tennis Federation (ITF) Juniors Circuit at The Villages Clubhouse Courts here at the University of Iloilo during the SEAG Federation meeting here on Oct. 11-12.

Some 56 officials from the 11 SEAG member-countries are expected to arrive here this weekend to attend the two-day meeting aimed to finalize the memorandum of understanding on the conduct of sports and their respective events.

The federation has already approved 34 sports, with the Philippine Olympic Committee setting a target of no more than 400 gold medals to be disputed in 22.

The six other sports hoping to make it at the last minute are squash, lawn bowls, powerlifting, bodybuilding, muay thai, soft tennis and wall climbing.

Of these sports, only weightlifting and bodybuilding carry a promise of gold medals for the country, which is bidding to name the next all-time host to the third hosting of the biennial event.

Though the country's ice-skating team have been winning abroad, the sport lacks difficulty getting the approval of other member-nations.

The arch-stopped Philippine SEA Games Organizing Committee (Philsoc) had earlier decided on reducing the number of events per sport as an additional cost-cutting measure. The proposed event is drawing 136 gold medals (20) are expected to be strained although both are perennially rich sources of golds in the host country.

6-2, 6-1, in advance against Korean qualifier Han Sung Ho, who scored a 7-6 (2), 6-3 upset win over second seed Taiwanese Lee Chia-chia.

Narvaez, on the other hand, overthrew Korean qualifier Hong Hee-Jin, 6-2, 6-2, and will meet top seed Taiwanese Chang Hsin-en, 6-1, 6-1, who outlasted Malaysian Ezahar Rawi.

In the girls' singles, top seed Korean Chin Seol Ji blasted fifth seed and first leg champion Japanese Ayano Okuma, 6-4, 6-0, to reach the semifinals of this event sanctioned by the Asian Tennis Federation.

Chin will meet third seed American Veronica Li, who rallied past contended Japanese Natsumi Hokaza, 2-7, 7-6, 2, 6-4.

Second seed Filipino-German Anie Maxene Peter, runner-up in the tournament's first leg, struggled past seventh seed Korean Jeong Woo Young, 5-7, 6-4, 6-2, to forge a semifinal showdown with contended Taiwanese Hsu Sze-pin, a 6-1 6-1 whipper over Taiwanese qualifier Tai Chia-chin.

In the girls' doubles, top seeds Liu Ting-chi and Hsu Yen-chen of Taiwan downed locals Nikki Morales and Michelle Ong, 6-0, 6-0; Nguyen Thuy Dung of Vietnam and Kong Pui-Sang of Taiwan defeated locals Fay de Castro and Noelle Cordeba Zolata, 6-2, 7-6 (11), and Korean pair Chin Seol Ji and Kim Ji Hyun bested Thai duo Amornsri and Milinta Ohlan, 6-2, 6-1, to earn second-round berths.

10 sports still eyeing SEA Games berths

By Marc Anthony Reyes

TEN more national sports associations from shooting, tennis and weightlifting to roughcon ice skating and wall climbing will attempt a last-hour entry to the 2005 Manila-Cebu Games master of ceremony during the SEAG federation meeting here on Oct. 11-12.

Some 56 officials from the 11 SEAG member-countries are expected to arrive here this weekend to attend the two-day meeting aimed to finalize the memorandum of understanding on the conduct of sports and their respective events.

The federation has already approved 34 sports, with the Philippine Olympic Committee setting a target of no more than 400 gold medals to be disputed in 22.

The six other sports hoping to make it at the last minute are squash, lawn bowls, powerlifting, bodybuilding, muay thai, soft tennis and wall climbing.

Of these sports, only weightlifting and bodybuilding carry a promise of gold medals for the country, which is bidding to name the next all-time host to the third hosting of the biennial event.

Though the country's ice-skating team have been winning abroad, the sport lacks difficulty getting the approval of other member-nations.

The arch-stopped Philippine SEA Games Organizing Committee (Philsoc) had earlier decided on reducing the number of events per sport as an additional cost-cutting measure. The proposed event is drawing 136 gold medals (20) are expected to be strained although both are perennially rich sources of golds in the host country.

SPORTSWATCH

Air Philippines tryout for PBL team

MEN Philippines, one of two newcomers to the PBL, will hold a three-day tryout starting today at the Taekwon Gym in Quezon. Through the season meeting Open Championship starts two weeks from now, search is open for Olympian Antonio Tamayo who has been a sympathetic team in Air Philippines' transition campaign in the country's premier amateur league. Champion said only players drafted by the rookie and displaced draft last Tuesday and non-agents are allowed to join the tryout session starts at 1 p.m.

Manotoc's PAGDF backs Arevalo Cup

THE 2004 Golfers' championship to be known as the Arevalo Cup has gained a major backer in the Philippine Amateur Golf Development Foundation. Former Manotoc, chief of the PAGDF and general manager of the Caballegan Golf Club, the host course to the event behind the successful and vibrant the championship layout in Batangas and other club committee for free. The 36-year-old Manotoc, who recently won the Asia Pacific Senior Amateur Fifteen Singapore, also agreed to take up position for tournament and make the Arevalo Cup one of the first properties of the PAGDF. The tournament to open on 15 the club invites champions of the Philippine Amateur Golf Association Championship, the Caballegan Golf Club, the Manila Golf Club, the Manila Golf Club, the Manila

Miami feels heat early

MIAMI — With Shaquille O'Neal's status recognizable only among nine new faces on Miami's current roster, Heat coach Stan Van Gundy expects to deal with some growing pains during training camp.

And that's why Van Gundy wasn't bothered Tuesday when the first formal practice of the O'Neal era featured an array of passes sailing into the stomachs, forearms and noses moving in the wrong spots.

"We've got to all learn to play together. We've got to get everybody on the same page, playing the same system," Van Gundy said.

O'Neal, an 11-time All-Star and three-time NBA Finals MVP, was traded to Miami from the Los Angeles Lakers on July 14, to ease things will begin to click before the Heat's Nov. 3 regular season opener at New Jersey.

"It's going to be fun. It's going to be interesting," said O'Neal, who's averaged 25.1 points over his first 12 NBA seasons.

In Charlotte, Stephen Gladue quickly is learning the slow and careful way of being a rookie. Picked No. 3 Thursday's draft, Gladue made that patience last week at a news conference with 300 schoolchildren in preseason game Sonicers his opponents Charlotte Bobcats and O'Neal's Miami Heat. Getting little reaction from the crowd, he tried to rouse the kids.

"Come on!" he yelled. "Don't you guys want to see me dunk on Shaq?"

Charlotte management, aware of the TV crews in attendance, immediately reneged in the days since that, the No. 2 pick to the NBA draft has taken a ton of ribbing about it.

"Well I dunk on Shaq? The dickhead of that happening a very small," he said. "You've got to put in perspective where I said that." AP

DIDN'T let the song look fool you. The Miami Heat and Shaquille O'Neal still have a lot of bonding to do before the season starts. AP PHOTO

SCOTTIE Pippen retires with one great thought: Michael Jordan once was one of Chicago's six titles without his rowdy sidekick. AP PHOTO

Scottie says g'bye

HIGHLAND, Illinois — Scottie Pippen joined the scrimmage of his basketball greatness after creating a partnership the Chicago Bulls parlayed into six NBA dynasty series and titles in the 1990s.

Pippen's career came to an end Tuesday as he announced his retirement following 17 years in the league.

"So I stand here and say I look back, I don't think Michael (Jordan) had any championship rings without me," Pippen said of a basketball relationship that was mutually beneficial. AP

Woods weds secretly

WOODS and Nordegren on Lanai ceremony AFP

MAUNY LANE BEACH, Barbados — Golfing superstar Tiger Woods wed girlfriend Elin Nordegren in a lavish sunset ceremony at a posh resort on Tuesday reported People Magazine.

The 28-year-old Woods and the former Swedish nanny Nordegren, 24, exchanged vows Sept. 5 in the biggest of four events set up at the Sandy Lane resort.

Notable guests included former basketball stars Michael Jordan and Charles Barkley. A small army of security guards kept onlookers and the curious at a distance.

"He didn't act like he was going to get married," People quoted a source as saying. "He was very relaxed, like this was any other day for him." The decorations included 500 roses at the end of the aisles and a four-tier wedding cake. AFP

Star-studded cast in Philtobo races

TWO-leg Triple Crown winner Empire Ring, remembering High Octane and emerging star Real Spiry head the star-studded fields in their respective divisions in the keenly awaited 5th Philtobo Grand Championship Derby on Oct. 17 at the Santa Ana Park.

The event also features dam of Super Girl, recent maiden winner Sandstorm, former TC leg champion West Bound, Success Story and promising newcomers One Valiant and Lamborghini, making it the biggest gathering of the season's popular gallopers in one single day.

Buzzwords "Secret" Nike Jr., president of the Philippine Thoroughbred Owners and Breeders Association (Philtobo), said six major races will be contested during the Championship Day showcasing the growth of Philippine breeding and racing industry.

They are the Mitra Cup Juvenile Colts, Mitra Cup Juvenile Fillies, 3-Year-Old Colts, 3-Year-Old Fillies, Philtobo Open and the Classic.

The race, backed by the Philippine Racing Commission, Philippine Charity Club, PCSO, Horse Sense, Magic Millions Australia, Embrace and Mirables, will be shown in GSL 27 on Quick Plus to be shared at 9 p.m. Philtobo director Manny Silvey will host the show.

Empire Ring, who captured the Gregorio Cup and Hawaiianair's Cup in the recent TC Series, heads the SEO Colts (1,600 meters) race. After dominating the Juvenile Colts runners last year, Empire King will be challenged this time by Shadowfax, Stallion, Star Rebel, Working in Progress and Dragon Spirit.

High Octane, improved no-error in the 2003 Colts last year, tries his luck in the Classic (2,400 meters) where he will face Success Story and returnee Lord of All and Devil Boss.

Expected to get a share of racing fans' attention as the highly-touted 2-year-old Real Spiry who is an early pick to prevail in the Juvenile Colts. Also declared in the 1,500 meter event were Who Alex, Rookie Bird, Bienvenue and Sir Dragon.

Cagayan's Cup titlist Cover Girl, who is on a four-win run, joins the SEO Fillies (1,500m) where she battles Shah, Cool Nostalgia, Elite, Crescendo and Beautycon.

Mike added that the 6th Philtobo Horse Show will be held on June 20, also at the Santa Ana Park.

Twins take 1-0 lead vs Yankees; Sox up

NEW YORK — Johan Santana and the Twins escaped trouble with the help of a record-setting five double plays. Jacque Jones homered in his first start since the death of his father, and the Twins beat the Yankees 2-0 Tuesday to win their eighth straight opener in a postseason series.

"I was able to throw the right pitch at the right time because I knew my teammates can make some plays," Santana said.

Minutemen's Neil Patrol set field traces denied the Yankees with jumping catches—left fielder Shannon Stewart saved one run and possibly two on Ruben Sierra's shot in the second, and center fielder Torii Hunter pulled in an eighth-inning drive by Alex Rodriguez at the top of the wall.

Hunter also threw out John Olerud at the plate in the second, completing one of the double plays by the Twins, who set a record for time failings to a minimum-inning postseason game.

The Yankees have dropped the first round opener in three of the last four seasons—winning the series each time, but losing to Anaheim last years ago after leading 1-0.

In Anaheim, Curt Schilling pitched 6 2/3 effective innings, Manny Ramirez and Kevin Millar homered during a seven-run burst, and Boston beat Anaheim, 9-3, in Game 1 of the AL playoffs. AP

PROMO EXTENDED UP TO OCTOBER 30, 2004! Approved by DTI-MCR

ANNIVERSARY RUSH!

All yeanis ioat to your NISSAN dealership we celebrate our 22ND ANNIVERSARY with TRULY AFFORDABLE RATES and GREAT GIFT PACKAGES. Don't miss our most anticipated celebration ever as a new Sentra and X-TRAIL!

AS LOW AS 50,000 DOWN PAYMENT FOR THE SENTRA GX

PLUS AS MUCH AS P9,000 WORTH OF FREE ACCESSORIES

AS LOW AS 100,000 DP FOR THE X-TRAIL 200

PLUS AS MUCH AS P15,000 WORTH OF FREE ACCESSORIES

FREE ACCESSORY PACKAGES VARY PER MODEL. CONSULT YOUR DEALER FOR DETAILS. PACKAGES NOT CONVERTIBLE TO CASH.

NISSAN

CATCH YOUR DREAM DRIVE!

BUY a New NISSAN VDR for a chance to win a BRAND-NEW X-TRAIL or avail PHILIPS Dream Packages!

PHILIPS

NISSAN MOTOR PHILIPPINES, INC.

Ultron
The Ultimate Balance
More Engine Stress.
Fuel Fairies.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 7, 2004
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
B1
BUSINESS

P88.25 per Kg.

Neda warns vs non-passage of tax bills

By Michelle V. Rivera

THE NATIONAL Economic and Development Authority has sounded the alarm bells on the need for Congress to pass at least three of the proposed revenue-enhancement measures of the Arroyo administration before year's end, lest the country suffer the consequences of a credit-rating downgrade.

According to Neda Director General Romulo Neri, the government has to immediately implement three to four measures to convince the international capital market and credit-rating agencies that the country has the political will and capability to address its fiscal problems.

Neri said that of the eight tax measures, Congress should at least pass the ones proposing an indexation to inflation of taxes on cigarettes and alcohol, the imposition of a performance-based incentive system for government agencies, a tax amnesty, and the rationalization of fiscal incentives.

"We need to pass these measures before the end of this year to send a positive signal that we are solving the fiscal problem. We have the priority measures still be passed by Congress," Neri said in an interview with reporters after the Philippine Business Conference yesterday at the Manila Hotel.

Of the four measures, Neri said the most crucial was the indexation of taxes of cigarettes and alcohol products to inflation, which he said was being watched closely by the international community. The Cabinet has been enough lobbying for the legislation of the proposal since 2001 because of the ill-effects of the perceived flaws in the country's system of taxing cigarettes and alcohol, but Congress had failed to act on the matter.

On the planned tax amnesty, Neri said it was necessary that it be passed together with the proposed annual submission of enumeration of assets and liabilities (SALN) of all taxpayers. The Arroyo administration wants to use the SALN to create a database, from which the government could detect tax cheats. The tax amnesty bill being pushed by the Arroyo administration's economic team has a provision requiring the annual submission of the SALN, but Congress dropped the provision stating it should be legislated as a separate bill.

The proposed lateral attrition is aimed at completing the government's program to streamline the bureaucracy so as to reduce its expenditures.

The rationalization of fiscal incentives is intended to reduce the bargain rentals, which stood at more than P200 billion last year alone, due to the many tax and duty-free privileges given to businesses. The Arroyo administration wants to remove incentives that are deemed no longer necessary.

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas also raised a similar warning that the Philippines risked a credit-rating downgrade if no revenue-enhancement measure is passed before the end of the year.

The central bank's warning was later echoed by Fitch Ratings, which said it would lower the country's credit rating if no significant reform was undertaken to address the country's fiscal problems.

A credit-rating downgrade will increase the government's cost of borrowings, in the process aggravating the country's already-troublesome fiscal position.

Chinese firm moves $300-M project to Subic

By Rommel W. Dominguez

CHINA'S leading glass maker has decided to build a $300-mill. heavy manufacturing plant in the Subic Freeport, according to the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority.

"Trade Secretary Cesar V. Purisima said in September that China's Hebei Jingbo Group Co. Ltd. was looking for a possible site in Bataan for a planned industrial park, which would have the glass plant as anchor project.

Purisima said Hebei wanted a site with an area of between 300 hectares and 1,00 hectares for its Crystal Bell Industrial Park.

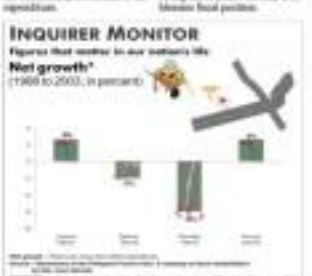
Outgoing SBMA Chair Felicito C. Payumo said Hebei's project—the biggest investment so far from mainland China—would serve as a magnet for more Chinese investments.

Payumo said SBMA would be providing more than 500 hectares of industrial estate to the glass firm and its allied companies.

He said SBMA had identified as a possible site 45 to 50 ares along the Submala Peninsula where Shell Philippines Exploration BV built the foundation for its Malampaya platform off Palawan.

Payumo said the Submala site was ideal for the glass factory, which would require the use of barges and other freight

(CONTINUED ON A2)



Shin tax

BY THE rough job of working to the privacy of my home, such home having able to wear old an dressed while working. I often have unreasonable solicitation from public officials.

Just last week, based on reports, in all the major dailies of this morning concern, the economic managers of this rare administration of Gloria[illegible] had nothing better to do.

And to they had to open their big mouths.

Taking us, I guess, would make it appear, at least in media, that they were still on top of things, although millions of us were going hungry.

According to the reports, as a policy, this ugly administration would no longer borrow abroad to cover its gaping budget deficit.

They, it's a laudable policy statement.

Hemingbird, sure, but still laudable, if only for its being ridiculous!

* * *

WHAT will happen to this last island country if this overweight cash administration, all of a sudden, stops taking foreign exchange through borrowings abroad?

According to the veteran bankers, G. V. Espinosa, who is banking circles is said to be the Bangko Sentral governor in waiting, to mentioned time and again by current Governor Rafael Buenaventura, if a unsafe and good to the country.

He said that the external government loan no obligation to help the central bank raise foreign exchange, and that their debilitate the peso's exchange rate.

Translation: (mine)—the shabby cash administration must be out of its mind!

If, all of a sudden, the external government stops its foreign borrowings, no way can the country survive the resulting shortfall in foreign exchange.

The new policy might sound idealistic if only for its being ridiculous!

* * *

WHAT will happen to this last island country if this overweight banker who, a few years ago, was asked by this cash administration to join its economic team as finance secretary.

That was even before former Cabinet member Jose Isidro "Tito Sito" Camacho relocated from the energy department to the finance department.

Even at that time, Espinosa personally believed that the finance department did need another banker at its helm.

Well, I also happen to think that, today, this country needs a banker at the DOF, as much as the country needed more Jose Fidel Isidro accounts.

* * *

ANYWAY, from what I hear, Espinosa already advised the secretary of finance-to-be to bring her own finance secretary, this should consider two things.

One, the new secretary must have enough political savvy, because he or she must push the controversial tax measures in Congress.

And, two, he or she or it is whomever the gender, must have the guts to pursue the collection of all taxes due the government.

Based on these two criteria, a banker hardly qualifies.

Bankers only know how to close money through their contacts in the international financial system.

Managing the ups-of politics and not wrestling with corruption in the revenue agencies, surely, are not part of a banker's training.

And so it seems to me that, for the next finance secretary, we need someone short of being a great, with, okay an "educated" guess!

Probably in the middle of, BIT!

* * *

(If for another anyone following in Congress are like-minded "yes" votes.

We follow the issue to such, because there supposedly are to do, one sign "votes," namely, smoking and drinking.

From what I gathered, our brave lawmakers already filed more than 30 versions of the new "sin" taxes.

One of these is the Pola House version.

That particular version tries to be underhanded one of the excesses on cigarette, beer and liquor, which today is a "specific" tax, meaning, it's an absolute peso amount, and not a percentage tax of the retail or wholesale price.

Now, "indexation" only means, for the sake of being real fair, the peso amount of the "sin" taxes automatically goes up along with inflation.

The DOF is siding with Pola House on that score.

The DOF does not have its own version of the "sin" taxes.

Here, it does not want the other versions. It just wants Isidro's.

Well, this particular tax measure is a bit sensitive.

Big lobby money, in the past, went around Congress for the same tax measure.

I just don't know what group got to the office of Isidro first this time.

* * *

SEIKO reports already showed the position of the biggest tobacco company in the world, the US brand Philip Morris.

The company, which even got tax incentives from this cash administration, is pushing for a PL on one the board increase in the "specific" excise tax on cigarettes.

That's a nice move. Well, for the benefit of Philip Morris, it is!

In 1996, when the administration of Fidel Ramos forced the duty-free "all volume" (percentage) tax to "specific" tax, that raise Philip Morris unexpectedly behind (economically) in Congress.

And so was its lending competitors in the local market, now other than Fortune Tobacco of tuyon Lucio Tan.

Guess who now, Philip Morris, otherwise?

* * *

It's result of the famous "shift," aside from the need to adjust the tax rate upon and again, the government revenue from cigarettes failed to grow as expected.

In 1996, under an all volume system, Fortune's "Hope" brand was taxed an equivalent of 48 percent tax of the retail price. Philip Morris' Menthol, at that time, was taxed 58 percent of the retail price.

After the famous "shift," Hope now pays an equivalent of 30 percent of the retail price, and Philip Morris, only 48 percent. How ironic.

In what does the PL increase the board proposal of Philip Morris to do?

By premium assorted brand now sells at P25 per pack, of which P13 to P24 go to taxes. The P1 increase is not even 7 percent of the tax.

For other low-priced local brands, now taxed at P8.40 per pack, the increase is about three and a half times.

In short, under the Philip Morris proposal, small guys get it in the shin. Tsk, tsk, tsk—such color guys!

* * *

ANYONE, back to the policy of this shabby cash administration to avoid borrowings/borrowings, I refuse that such borrowings of, so to say part of the Bangko Sentral's international reserves.

With the help from the various of government in raising foreign exchanges, such as through borrowings, according to Espinosa, the peso is bound to depreciate.

Its the hungry us, is poor dependence a tool for the national government itself.

It seems that it will have to pay over higher interest, in peso terms, on its existing dollar-denominated debt.

Such a result, by the way, is tragic.

Thus, to Espinosa, if only to buy time for this country to develop enough to such a point it will no longer need foreign borrowings, the national government has to examine its bookkeeping system.

Such...and it's a big BIT!...according to Espinosa, it's not all about foreign borrowings. We must also do the enormously overlooked potential.

Or else it's the debt trap for us all over again.

intimus
PAPER SHREDDERS
KEEP YOUR SECRETS, SECRET!
P5,990
P8,250
P10,950
P21,950
A VITAL PART OF YOUR SECURITY
Highly RECOMMENDED by the World Intelligence Organizations
Edic
COMPUSOFT
SOLUTIONS

Chinese firm moves $300-M project to Subic

[illegible] hopes to bring in raw materials and move out finished products for export via the Port of Subic.

The SBMA chief added that Chinese officials will have guaranteed investment incentives that a country later already improved incentives to set up their operations in Subic.

Last month, Paranaue said Subic's proposed industrial zone could include rare earth production line by ramed flour glass, which means that the cost of producing could be put on the glass at the same time that the glass is being made.

The business park would also have two high-tech buildings selling crystalline glass items and another line that could combine the first two.

Rebel also wants to put up a 10,000 hectare oil-adjoin power plant as well as a petrochemical line for plastic pellets, which would be the first in the country.

Paranaue said the project was expected to break ground before the middle of 2005, when Chinese President Hu Jintao is scheduled to visit the Philippines.

The project is seen to create a total of 15,000 jobs for direct and indirect employment, he added.

Hebei's main products include a variety of float sheet glass, online color coated reflective glass, high-tech rolling crystalline glass with all kinds of color and specific values.

Its products are exported to some 70 countries in Europe, Asia, the Americas and Africa. However, products from the planned facility in Subic will be shipped primarily to Japan.

BUSINESS SOLUTIONS THAT FIT!
Affordable and tested Solutions that you can use from day 1!
For Small-to-Medium Enterprises
PASTEL ACCOUNTING
P15,888
P53,200
RUSHHOUR
P19,800
COMDAP EXPO MANILA 2004

OPEN TO PROFESSIONALS AND TRADE VISITORS ONLY!
ESPAÑA EXPORTA 2004
October 26 to 28
Hotel Intercontinental Manila
The Spanish Institute for Foreign Trade (ICEX) is organizing "España Exporta", a fair exclusively for Spanish enterprises from sectors such as food and beverage, engineering and consulting, machinery and equipment, and consumer goods in Manila on October 26 to 28, 2004 at the Hotel Intercontinental Manila.
The Spanish Commercial Office has been tasked to arrange business matching sessions together with interested distributors, agents and importers of the different showcased products and services.
A. FOOD AND BEVERAGE PRODUCTS
B. CONSUMER PRODUCTS
C. MACHINERY AND EQUIPMENT
D. ENGINEERING AND CONSULTING
E. INSTITUTIONAL
España Exporta 2004
For business meeting requests with these companies, contact Ms. Ana Rocha
telephone no. 843-3774/75 • fax no. 843-3780
or e-mail manila@mcx.es for a time slot which is most convenient for you.

BSP issues rules on credit card collection

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE MONETARY Board has issued a circular on credit card collection, addressing growing complaints about "unfair" practices by some credit card issuers and collectors.

In the said circular, the policy-making body of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas ordered all banks, their subsidiaries or affiliates credit card companies and collection agents to stick to "reasonable" and "legally permissible" means to collect payments and avoid "unscrupulous" acts.

The order identified the following prohibited acts in collecting credit card receivables:

• The use or threats of violence or other criminal means to harm the physical person, reputation, or property of any person;

• The use of obscenities, insults, or profane language which amount to a criminal act or offense under applicable laws;

• Disclosure of the names of credit cardholders who allegedly refuse to pay debts, except as allowed under existing rules;

• Threat to take any action that cannot legally be taken;

• Communicating, or threat to communicate to any person credit information known to be false, including failure to communicate that a debt is being disputed;

• Any false representation or deceptive means to collect or attempt to collect any debt or to obtain information concerning a cardholder; and,

• Making contact at unreasonable/inconvenient times or hours which should be defined as contact before 8 a.m. or after 10 p.m., unless the account is past due for more than 60 days or the cardholder has given permission or that the card issuer are the only reasonable or convenient opportunities for contact.

The new circular also required the issuers to fully disclose the billing details behind transactions made in foreign currencies and/or outside the Philippines, such as application of payments, currency conversion, conversion commission and other conversion charges.

The circular also said banks and non-banks must disclose more or less their interest rates, fees and other charges.

Instructed banks refer to credit card receivables that have been renegotiated or modified to either lengthen the maturity or the original schedule of installment payments, or subsequently enter the original terms and conditions of the credit card agreement due to credit quality concerns. This account does not include receivables whose original terms and conditions were modified at the instance of the cardholder but which have not shown unsatisfactory deterioration in the form of non-payment.

Geothermal firm assumes new name

TIWI, Albay—After more than 10 years as the sole geothermal business in the country, the Philippine Geothermal Inc., a wholly-owned subsidiary of the Union Oil of California (Unocal), has changed its name to Unocal Philippines Inc. or UPI.

The change in the company name was announced by Barry Andrews, UPI president, in a formal ceremony held at the company's compound here on Oct. 1.

According to Andrews, UPI has pioneered in the commercial development of the country's geothermal resources, in partnership with the then-owned National Power Corp. (NPC).

UPI boasts of having the most highly trained and dedicated workforce in the geothermal industry.

Andrews said that UPI and NPC-Tiwi developed geothermal resources in the Tiwi field in Albay province and the Mahiao-Bacon (Mak-Ban) field in the Laguna and Batangas areas.

This led to the birth of geothermal energy in the country, he said.

For 20 years, UPI has supplied steam that provides fuel to the power plants in Tiwi, Albay and in Mak-Ban in Laguna, which are owned and operated by the NPC, Andrews said.

Together, the two power plants produce about 8 percent of the electricity demand in Luzon.

According to Andrews, Unocal is a name that's been tried and proved of. UPI is a fully integrated international energy resources company operating in Europe and in Asian countries.

To date, the country is the second largest energy producer in the world. —Romeo Layug, PIA Southern Luzon

Gov't urged to keep zero duty on tin plates

By Russel W. Domingo

CENTRAL: Chairman of National Steel Corp., seeking protective tariff on steel products ranging from 27 percent to 30 percent from the current zero to 3 percent.

LEGAL tin can makers are again appealing to the Malacañang might to use an order to raise tariffs on tin plates while Congress is away.

Henry A. Taliedo, president and chair of the Tin Can Manufacturers Association of the Philippines Inc., yesterday said it would be better for the local industry to wait as to the consequences to imposition tariffs on tin plates at zero.

TCMAP groups 10 companies accounting for about 70 percent of all tin plates used in the country. The bulk of the country's tin plates come from Japan and South Korea and the rest from Australia and South Africa.

Taliedo said the cost of imported tin plates had gone up by about $100 per metric ton between January and August this year.

"We are appealing to the Department of Trade and Industry to help us fight any possible tariff increase for tin plates," Taliedo said.

He said the group was always on the alert whenever Congress was in recess because this was the time when Malacañang issued executive orders.

The Tariff Commission is currently hearing a petition from United Steel works International Inc., the new owner of National Steel Corp., seeking protective tariff on steel products ranging from 27 percent to 30 percent from the current zero to 3 percent.

GSR is also asking the commission to raise the import duty on tin plates to 30 percent.

In yesterday's meeting of the National Price Coordinating Council, Trade Undersecretary Adrian S. Cristobal Jr. said the NPCC had agreed to support TCMAP's campaign for a status quo in the tin plate tariff.

"This case account for 40 percent of the cost of producing canned goods," Cristobal said. "An increase in tariffs would mean an increase in prices of food goods."

In a related development, GSR announced in a statement that it had started the export of steel products last month.

"A trial shipment of 5,000 metric tons of cold rolled coils worth more than $3.0 million (about P168 million) was sent to China on Sept. 4," GSR officials said.

They said the cargo was sent as "a symbol of the world-class production that Iligan steel mill in Iligan City, could make to the national economy."

GSR has been "bringing into full operation and exploring export markets for steel from the Iligan mill, while various interest groups are raising questions about the sale of Iligan to foreign owners," they added.

Company president Tashiaki C. Ito said that sending a trial shipment to the world's largest steel producer means China would become a potential market for Philippine steel when its mill went into commercial production.

GSR is a unit of the Indian-owned Ispat Industries and it acquired the Iligan steel mill for $120 million. It recently completed a P1-billion blown pipemill.

French firms participating in Agrilink Fair

EIGHT French companies are set to take a Philippine fair by storm this month.

According to Eric Cadillon, economic and commercial counselor of the French Embassy in Manila, the French companies in Manila, the French firms would actively participate in the Agrilink/Foodlink Fair 2004 to be held at the at the World Trade Center in Pasay City on Oct. 14-16.

The French companies hope to "promote their products to Filipino industry professionals and demonstrate their state-of-the-art manufacturing and their better quality products," Cadillon said.

Products to be on display are of agricultural products to Europe, Cadillon added. The French companies desire their strength base a strong agricultural tradition, developing the country's expertise in the field.

Among France's primary products are wines, champagne, meat (beef, pork, sheep, poultry) and natural foods.

The French firms that will participate in the Agrilink/Foodlink fair include Sayle S.A., which manufactures poultry slaughtering equipment; France Abattoir which is involved in pig breeding; Le Coffre Fire Dor Lux, which produces wines from Bordeaux, Bourgogne, Côtes Du Rhone and Loire Valley; and Pal Industries which manufactures feeds and water systems for poultry and swine.

SUPPORTING ORGANIZATIONS

PATRONS

INSTITUTIONAL ENDORSERS

EXHIBITORS

COME & VISIT

A Wine and Culinary Experience

Chefs on Parade

OCTOBER 7-8-9, 2004

CLAMSHELL 1 & 2 LAOAG ST. & DEL LUNA ST. INTRAMUROS

• Consists of 26 Live & Display Competitions
• More than 500 professional & student chefs as competitors
• Some 1,500 gourmet participants, artists & service personnel as participants
• More than 200 competition entities to be judged
• 50 Professional & HRM School Tastes
• Various Booths: Food Street, F & B Books & Magazines Kitchen & Dining Store, Culinary School Mart

COMPETITION SERIES

DAY 1

DAY 2

DAY 3

COOP FOOD PARTICIPANTS

PROFESSIONAL DIVISION

STUDENT DIVISION

BUSINESS

Petron, Total raise prices of diesel, LPG

By Abigail L. Ho

Energy Secretary Vincent Perez said in an earlier interview that the Department of Energy would continue to appeal so oil firms not to implement big price increases, particularly on the socially sensitive diesel.

Instead, he said price increases should be implemented on a staggered basis—more frequent but at lower amounts.

Lucrel diesel prices have risen to reflect the escalating prices of diesel in the international markets.

Diesel based on the Mean of Platts Singapore (MOPS) benchmark for refined petroleum products averaged $54.20 a barrel in September, rising almost $1 from the August average of $53.146.

The uptrend is seen to continue in the coming months, Perez said, as international prices showed no sign of letting up.

Persistent threats as well as actual acts of terrorism in Iraq, continuing unrest in Nigeria, the concerted acts of Russian oil giant Yukos, and the huge Chinese and American demand continue to drive world oil prices up.

The advent of the winter months in the northern hemisphere is also seen to boost international prices even more.

DIESEL prices have gone up 11 times by a total of P5.25-P5.45 a liter since the start of the year. NICK ROMERO

BSP rules out hike in key policy rates

BANGKOK (Bernama) Philippine central bank said any immediate hike in interest rates in the Philippines despite a sharp spike in inflation.

Acting central bank governor Armando Ibanez said inflation due arise and new might exceed government targets but the bank expects the interest rate measure setting from high oil prices to ease in 2006.

"Given the lack of propensities, evidence of demand-driven inflationary pressures or second-order inflationary effects from ongoing supply shocks, the [central bank] finds no compelling reason at this time to modify present monetary policy settings," Ibanez said in a statement.

He said the central bank, however, "continues to stand ready to respond" in the event price pressures grow as a result of supply-side shocks or developments on the foreign exchanges as a result of narrowing interest rate differentials between the Philippines and other countries.

Consumer price rose by a higher than expected 7.2 percent in September due to higher oil and food prices, up from 6.9 percent in August.

The central bank has kept interest rates unchanged for a year at their lowest levels in 12 years. Overnight rates are at 6.75 percent but borrowing and 9.00 percent for lending.

"Monetary authorities believe that ongoing pressures on inflation remain largely rooted in the impact of supply shocks on prices. They also continues to expect that supply-side factors will remain the primary source of risk to the inflation outlook," Ibanez said. AFP

Offer to build $600-M MRT-7 rejected

By Michaela V. Barrios

THE ARROYO administration rejected a private group's initial proposal to build Line 7 of Metro Rail Transit (MRT-7) due to the huge cost the government would be required to shoulder in the first nine years of the railway's operations.

Universal LRT Corp., the consortium, was asked to improve its proposal within 10 months by the government's consideration.

Melo Director General Rolando Mel said projects that were financially dependent on the government would not longer be approved in view of the country's fiscal problem. He said only projects that would not aggravate the government's already gaping budget deficit had the chance of getting approved.

The proposed MRT-7, which will run from North Edsa to Tala, Novaliches, was estimated to cost $600 million.

According to its operational and financial design, however, the mass transport system's revenues from ridership will not be enough to cover all its expenses in the first nine years of operations. The project is expected to incur a deficit of about P100 million a year.

Universal LRT wanted the government to absorb the deficits during the nine-year period.

The consortium said that surpluses would be posted beginning the 10th year of operations, and that the government could be gradually paid for its advances by then until the 25th year.

Under the proposal, the consortium, led by Builder Finance Secretary Roberto de Ocampo, will build, operate and maintain the MRT-7 for 25 years, after which it will be transferred to the national government. The consortium said it would also take charge of raising the financing for the project.

"We want them to improve on their proposal so that the government will no longer have to shoulder the deficits," Mel told reporters after attending the Philippine Business Conference yesterday.

Neda's Investment Coordination Committee, the one responsible for approving government projects, has given Universal LRT Corp. 10 months to refunds the project proposal in such as a way that its financing will not result in such huge deficits.

The development of the MRT-7 project was earlier approved by the Neda-ICC, but it will have to undergo another round of deliberations by the agency if the consortium failed to submit an improved proposal within 10 months.

The Neda-ICC wants a project proposal that will not require advances from the national government and that will not show such huge deficits.

Once the consortium submits a proposal that is already acceptable to the government, it will have to be advertised and opened to challenge by other interested investors.

Mel said the government had adopted the policy of approving only projects that were fully financed and do not require subsidies or that efforts to develop the country's infrastructure would be adversely affect to finances. The country's chief economist stressed that there was a need to balance the need to develop the country's weak infrastructure and solve the financial problems.

The national government's budget deficit stood at P199.9 billion last year and is expected to hit P197.8 billion by yearend. Its debt has already ballooned to over P3 trillion as of the first half.

To address the fiscal problem, the government is lining up revenue enhancement measures such as new taxes and cost-cutting initiatives like streamlining of the bureaucracy.

3 dream machines. 3 easy-own schemes. Fulfill your fantasy.

FRONTIER! ₱107,800* downpayment

Nissan Frontier SE 4x2 M/T (2004)	Nissan Frontier SE 4x2 M/T (2003)	Nissan Frontier SE 4x2 A/T (2003)
SRP: ₱ 718,000	SRP: ₱ 660,000	SRP: ₱ 684,000
LOW DOWNPAYMENT 20% Downpayment ₱ 143,600	LOW DOWNPAYMENT 20% Downpayment ₱ 131,800	LOW DOWNPAYMENT 20% Downpayment ₱ 136,800
Actual Cash Out ₱107,800	Actual Cash Out ₱111,000	Actual Cash Out ₱111,000
LOW MONTHLY Based on 20% DP at 48 months ₱7,307	LOW MONTHLY Based on 20% DP at 48 months ₱6,441	LOW MONTHLY Based on 20% DP at 48 months ₱6,362
ZERO INTEREST 12 Months - 20% 18 Months - 50%	ZERO INTEREST 12 Months - 20% 18 Months - 50%	ZERO INTEREST 12 Months - 20% 18 Months - 50%

PATROL! ₱368,000* downpayment

Nissan Patrol GL 4x2 A/T (Gas)	Nissan Patrol GL 4x2 A/T (Diesel)	Nissan Patrol GL 4x2 M/T (Diesel)
SRP: ₱ 1,120,000	SRP: ₱ 1,120,000	SRP: ₱ 1,120,000
LOW DOWNPAYMENT 20% Downpayment ₱448,000	LOW DOWNPAYMENT 20% Downpayment ₱448,000	LOW DOWNPAYMENT 20% Downpayment ₱448,000
Actual Cash Out ₱483,000	Actual Cash Out ₱507,000	Actual Cash Out ₱388,000
LOW MONTHLY Based on 40% DP at 48 months ₱27,231	LOW MONTHLY Based on 40% DP at 48 months ₱28,109	LOW MONTHLY Based on 30% DP at 48 months ₱25,000
ZERO INTEREST 12 Months - 50%	ZERO INTEREST 12 Months - 50%	ZERO INTEREST 12 Months - 50%

URVAN! ₱150,000* downpayment

Nissan Urvan Passenger	Nissan Urvan Shuttle/DX
SRP: ₱ 900,000	SRP: ₱ 900,000
LOW DOWNPAYMENT 20% Downpayment ₱ 180,000	LOW DOWNPAYMENT 20% Downpayment ₱ 180,000
Actual Cash Out ₱150,000	Actual Cash Out ₱150,000
LOW MONTHLY Based on 30% DP at 60 months ₱10,943	LOW MONTHLY Based on 30% DP at 60 months ₱10,443
ZERO INTEREST 12 Months - 20% 18 Months - 50%	ZERO INTEREST 12 Months - 20% 18 Months - 50%

Special financing offer now available for Frontier Titanium and 4x4 pick-ups. (excluding fuel standard variant)

BPI FAMILY SAVINGS BANK

EXTENDED UNTIL OCT. 15 ONLY!

Promo: until Oct. 15, 2004 only. Approved by DTI-NCR.

NISSAN

50 YEARS

3 YEAR WARRANTY

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

DISCLOSURES

RAMON Rivera Jr., first vice president of the Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. (PLDT), disposed 1,000 PLDT shares at P1,400 on Oct. 1.

* * *

PLDT announced the appointment of Rene Banal as chief governance officer effective Oct. 5.

* * *

ZENAIDA Pestaño, general counsel of the Philippine Stock Exchange, tendered his resignation effective Oct. 6.

* * *

TEAM SK Ltd., of England and **Cope Energy Pty. Ltd.**, of Western Australia, and members of the SK14 consortium have signed a farm-in agreement, covering the Sabre area to be developed by the companies at their own cost in exchange for an 80 percent equity.

* * *

ASIAN MUST Development Bank Inc. appointed Lydia Yan as vice president, chief legal counsel and corporate secretary. It has elected as officers-in-charge of the controllership group, and Omar Villegas as corporate secretary/admin officer.

* * *

ASIAN MUST will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on Nov. 19 in the Bahia Room, Sky Top, Hotel Intercontinental Manila in Makati City at 2 p.m.

Compiled by D.J. Yap, PDI Research

CURRENCIES

Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
1.00000	56.2000
1.36000	76.2000
1.84000	103.0000
0.00000	0.0000
0.00000	0.0000
0.00000	0

REGGIE Aspiras' first gourmet cooking teacher /C4

LIFESTYLE

CHEF Rolando Laudico and his Bonito sapiz topped with shiitake cappuccino in martini glass (above, left)

Rolando Laudico

Bonito sapic topped with shiitake cappuccino cream in martini glass

It's a kind of soup where there's a cold gelatin part topped with a hot cream part. I wasn't sure if the guests would like it so even know how to eat it properly, but everyone seemed to enjoy the concept, and now I make different variations of the soup. It's great for other kinds of delicacies.

Smoked cured magret duck breast with grilled polenta, drizzled with sun-dried tomato pesto and orange glaze

It's actually a good dish, but I made the mistake of not slicing the duck breasts thinly the first time I served it. The guests dared it to tug chunks to eat, which turned out really salty. And tangerine-eating procedures are such thick... More water, please!

WHAT'S ON AT ROBINSONS

a world to discover

Even top chefs can't exactly predict whether a dish will click or not

Hits and misses

By Jay Gordoza
Contributor

FOR the Pinoy version of the "Culinary Hits and Misses" feature in the Food Arts magazine, we asked four chefs to name the dishes that they thought would be certified winners but turned out to be duds, and those that surprisingly sold well.

SLIMMERS WORLD

Over 25 years in the Philippines! 13 Slimmers World centers nationwide. 1,500 affiliates worldwide.

This week's special...

BUY 1 TAKE 1 FREE!

NO MONTHLY DUES! NO JOINING FEES!

FREE

SKIN HOTLINE 8871331
CELLPHONE 09164099312

FITNESS HOTLINE 8873533
CELLPHONE 0917984744

Great Body. Beautiful Skin. Choose both NOW!

CALL US

CAKE DECORATING; SAUSAGE MAKING; COOKING & BAKING LESSONS

Sylvia Reynoso-Gala

ERNEST REYNOSO GALA

Gourdo's Century Panasonic Hunts Monterey

Hits and misses

QUITO Jose

Quito Jose

Hit **Brothers' burger with cheese pimento**

It is a favorite of my brother Bimbo. It's very simple and even ordinary, but comfortingly comforting at the same time. I decided to try it out in one of the "Brothers Supportives" in our town, and was thrilled to see it become an instant culinary hit. It has become the best-selling Brothers Supportive on the Philippine-Japanese restaurant's familiar with cheese pimento to be a favorite childhood food or school merienda.

Miss **Lamb burger**

It did not perform the way we expected it to, but it will always be on our menu for sentimental reasons (it being our mom's favorite).

I worked for quite sometime on this evening. On the other, anything the seasoning, getting the combination of the flavors just right, all along thinking that I was making a masterpiece! It is still available for adventurous gourmands.

LAMB burger

DUET of grilled taucheo prawns, blending and squidink butter, aloe vinaigrette, achara of cherry tomatoes

Negro Asperas

Hit **Duet of grilled taucheo prawns, blending and squid ink butter, aloe vinaigrette, achara of cherry tomatoes**

I made this dish when I was invited to Singapore. They wanted a Pinoy fusion experience that would be suitable to the Singaporean palate.

A lot of Negro dishes start off with sweet-spice paste with a taucheo, a yellow bean, base). I marinated my prawns in a mixture of taucheo, chicken, garlic cracker chinese sugar made from coconuts), chilies and grilled them.

For an added twist, I came up with Gerberg butter (a small green sour fruit, very similar to the kamias, not a kalamansi, as most books debate it), it is used frequently in Negro cuisine. This is a pureed spin-off of the much-desired lemon butter, (the thousand island to prawns. This is done by pureeing the little green fruit and adding clarified butter. Color was another consideration. So I made squid ink butter by combining both and adding lemon butter (calamansi) and olive oil.

To garnish my purple cassava, I made an aloe risotto using coconut milk. I capped it off with an achara of cherry tomatoes in pickling water and coriander for an added burst of flavor and color. For garnishing, there was fried chervil.

It sold well because they didn't have much of a choice other than to eat it! Seriously, the Singaporeans gently stand-know what to expect from the club. As for the Pinoy diners, oh well, like all Pinoys, they just ate!

NEGRO Asperas

Miss **Warm salad of goat cheese cappelletti, baby lettuce, walnut brittle**

I don't really know why it didn't sell. Perhaps so many great ingredients and textures (e.g. Gruyere/Gorgonzola, Lipton, just doesn't cut it. But this salad remains one of my favorites.

NEGRO Seiko with lemon butter sauce

SEÑOR Anastacio Alba

Señor Anastacio Alba

Hit **Negro Seiko with lemon butter sauce**

There was a time when the Negro Seiko was not available in the market, but when it became available, and becoming the specific of the fish, I added it to my menu.

Suddenly it became the most popular among my fish dishes. It was done with not a lot of emphasis. The fish was seasoned with salt and pepper, dipped in milk, sprinkled with flour and pan fried in butter until a turned brown. The butter that was left was then heated. I added parsley and capers and used this as sauce.

I think the reason this dish sold well is because when Filipinos go to restaurants they most often choose something they do not have or cannot make at home.

Miss **Codillo Al Pastor, braised lamb shank with mashed potatoes**

I used to prepare this dish back in Spain. Here the chef of Guanchiangco Frisco was not to me by ordering for our whole month, but him to experiment to make this dish.

The lamb shank is braised with the best ingredients, such as rosemary, good red wines and fresh vegetables. These were cooked in the oven to produce a flavorful sauce.

Personally, I consider lamb as one of the best meats around. It has the best amount of fat and yet it is very tasty. The only reason I can think of why this dish is not that saleable in the Philippines is lamb is not so popular as other meats such as chicken and beef.

Globalization increases risks of food contamination

WHO asks government authorities to allocate more resources to ensuring food safety

ALL those mouthwatering stuff at the imported frozen food section of supermarkets! For example, the salmon, the Angus steak, lamb chops, seafood. And the varieties of exotic vegetables and fruits are almost too good to be true.

Do we thank globalization of the food trade for all these imported items that used to be rarities before the super liberalization days? Think again.

Far here to be a wet blanket, but the World Health Organization has warned that rapid globalization of the food trade has increased the risks of the spread of microbial or chemical hazards.

This was one of the health concerns raised at the recent two-day meeting by WHO Western Pacific regional committee meeting in Shanghai, China. Dr Shigeru Omi, regional director of the WHO Western Pacific Office (WHO/WPRO), called on government authorities to put more emphasis on food safety by allocating additional resources and doing more on the institutional front.

Citing the outbreak of Avian influenza (bird flu) and current concerns about food contamination in the region, the WHO official urged authorities to reduce the risks of foodborne diseases at the level of production, processing and marketing.

Dr Omi involved on the following issues: emergence in Asia of zoonoses (diseases transmitted to humans from animals); potential new risk threats to food safety; and health and economic consequences of food contamination and food-borne illnesses in the region.

An ounce of prevention

For its part, the WHO Regional Committee urged member states to strengthen the following: information sharing on food safety; cooperation among ministries, industry and consumers; and control of bird birth and animals for food. The committee also called on members to prevent emerging zoonotic diseases from growing to pandemic proportion.

Concerned consumer Lilli (lbalda@worx.com.ph) shares the following experience to warn readers about a dubious scheme using warranty cards.

"If you have just bought a new appliance and mailed back the warranty card to the manufacturer, you may get an unexpected phone call from a stranger announcing that your warranty card won in a raffle. The stranger will explain that the raffle was conducted by some kind of central desk where all warranty cards—regardless of appliance brand—are supposedly sent. Or, you could get a call from someone who supposedly picked up your warranty card somewhere. The caller will then offer to deliver the card to you, personally.

"I got such calls on the two occasions that I purchased new appliances. When I got the call about the raffle, I checked with the appliance manufacturers. They denied that their warranty cards were sent elsewhere, much less that there was a raffle.

"As for the 'kind' person who 'found' the warranty card, when I asked her to deliver it to my office (a media organization), which is easier to locate than my home, she flatly was not heard from again."

We don't wonder at all why these names are perpetuated. As most warranty cards are mailed without envelopes, all the personal data on the card are visible to all and nearby. The concerned consumer has the following advice: "The customer must inform the manufacturer and distributor about the loss of the warranty card and insist on getting a replacement. On the part of the manufacturers, they should have self-addressed stamped (even un-stamped) envelopes for warranty cards that can be sealed to keep the personal data of customers private."

Word of praise

A Global Cable subscriber (account number "032288) complained in this column last week about blurred cable television reception. The subscriber writes again to praise the speedy action by the customer care department and repair crew.

"True to the assurance of the cable service provider that technical complaint are resolved within 24 hours, the repair technicians responded to my complaint promptly after I reported the problem. They also called me up later to check that work was satisfactory.

"I don't regret leaving my previous cable TV provider that could not send a technician in less than six days, despite the fact they charged P200 for each visit. I hope this small, new company continues to give this kind of service no matter how big it gets."

E-mail the author at mgtvoice@manila.com.ph

Philippine Mission in Tokyo for F & B exhibit

TERESA DULA-LAUREL, president of Canor Iling Food Corporation and Mama Rosa, flew to Japan over the weekend with other participants to represent the Philippines in the Asian Food and Beverage Exhibition and Mission. The exhibit will be held at the Permanent Exhibition Hall (PEH) of the Asian-Japan Center (AJC) in Tokyo until today.

"I'm preparing Japanese food using Mama Rosa products such as sushi with fish roe, crab fat sauce and shrimp paste," said Laurel before departure.

The new Mama Rosa natural vinegar line will also be unveiled: coconut vinegar (regular), coconut vinegar with lemon chili, coconut vinegar with galangal, garlic and chili; sugar cane vinegar; palm vinegar; palm vinegar with galangal, garlic and chili.

"At the Asean exhibit in Tokyo last year," Laurel recalled, "people would crowd our booth, waiting for the food sampling or tasting time. They would start queuing up when they see us setting or preparing something... curious about what we'd be serving next. (So) allowed them that we need to introduce true Filipino cuisine abroad. To them, it's a new product, a new taste."

Laurel said crowd favorites were mango salsa, green mangoes, onions, tomatoes, cucumber and Mama Rosa bagoong.

Mama Rosa Crab Fat and Fish Roe Sauce perked up the curiosity of owners of sushi bars who found out that this would complement their own concoctions.

Laurel began developing sauces in 1980 as Christmas gifts to manila friends and relatives but had homemade recipes, especially her pioneering spicy bamboo sour and spicy dried cuttlefish. Bukas is oil, sees such hits that there was a chance for her to make them available all year-round. Two years later, she started selling these bottled delicacies under the brand name Mama Rosa in honor of her late mother, Rosa Eva Dula.

Today, Mama Rosa produces 37 bottled Filipino delicacies, including six kinds of vinegar, five pickled dishes and eight seafood preparations. They are available at Cuto-King outlets and in the two Mama Rosa restaurants in Quezon City. Abroad, Mama Rosa products are sold in Filipino stores, supplied by Arlit-bayans who join fairs by the various wherever they are in the Philippines.

With the enthusiastic acceptance of its products, Mama Rosa is now preparing to formally enter the foreign market. It has already started by joining international trade fairs. The response has been encouraging.

Aside Laurel in the mission are Francisco Sias, president of Sarsaral Quality Corp.; Celina Q. Agas and Alma Argapon, export managers of SFM Corp.; and members of the Virgin Coconut Oil Producers and Traders Association Inc. (VCOA), namely Jing Reyes of Manila Herbal, Mama Pastolero of Pastolero Agri-Ventures, and Teresa Gomez of Primavec International. Javier is the vice president of VCOA. They were accompanied by Jessica Sotoria, Project Manager for [illegible]

LIFESTYLE

For feedback, e-mail us at lifestyle@inquirer.com.ph

Text us your feedback: inquirer life name/city/ message to 2267 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)

ROMUALDEZ

cooking lessons
beth romualdez

Learn easy yet delicious everyday gourmet recipes from a brand-new cookbook

A teacher's teacher

THERE are people who come into your life and make a difference. In my case, it is Beth Romualdez.

I was 6 years old when my undying romance with food began. Thanks to my mom (my first kitchen icon and the best cook there is), whose kitchen skills and talent I'd like to think I inherited.

After mom, there followed a string of teachers who so kindly took me under their wings: from Tita Sylvia Reynoso to Ms Florendo, to Giulliano, Pierre and Luigi, the list goes on, 27 of them in all.

But none had a stronger influence than Tita Beth. She was, after all, my first gourmet cooking teacher, and I was her first student. My many firsts were with her: my first soufflé, fresh pasta, even a whole menu for a sit-down dinner. After years in her Avalon kitchen, she asked me to join her in one of her culinary sojourns to Europe.

When she returned to Manila to teach, I stayed behind for further studies. This was many moons ago.

Now history repeats itself. I have taken the same route she took—I am now a chef and a teacher.

Seven years ago, Beth set up a cooking school. When she gave up teaching, I took over and have been running the school for almost six years now—and counting. Yesterday she gave me the honor of introducing her at the launching of her book, "Cooking Lessons." (My own books are just around the corner.)

Without meaning to, our lives continued to run along parallel lines. A standing joke between us is that she must have been my mother in one of our many past lives. In fact, I fondly call her Mom.

Thank you, Mommy Beth, for holding on and for keeping up the fight, for paving the way for me, for being around to see what I've become. Thank you for everything you've done for me!

I suggest you get a copy of "Cooking Lessons" at the National Book Store. It contains easy yet delicious everyday gourmet recipes. Proceeds from sales will go to indigent women needing mammography for early breast cancer detection.

KITCHEN RESCUE

Reggie Aspiras

Yucky sponge

My kitchen sponge is dirty, gross even! What should I do?
YSABEL

I guess throw it away! But, if for some sentimental reason you want to keep it, soak it overnight in a solution of half vinegar and half water. After soaking, rinse with water and bleaching soap.

Baby food

I'm Fritz of La Union. I'm only 16 but I already have a family. Can I have baby food recipes?

Wow, 16! Should I say congratulations? You sure started early! I'll give you a recipe and Popcom's number (5316650).

Homemade applesauce

My 8-month-old is allergic to preservatives. The pediatrician recommends homemade applesauce three times a day to ease his allergies, but I don't know how [to make it]. Give me a recipe and some tips on preparing baby food.
LORY TIU

My dear Lory, who is your pedia? I think there's something wrong here. I've heard about an apple a day, but apples all day? Perhaps your baby will say goodbye to allergies but say hello to constipation!

Anyway, here's an applesauce recipe and some tips. Don't know if there's a difference between baby and adult applesauce, apart from the spices and the fact that one group has teeth while the other is toothless!

But before making applesauce, I suggest you change doctors. Here's Dr. Aye Nuguid's number (7518652/ 6354729). He's wonderful and perhaps one of the best there is in his profession. Better yet, he has a twin who is equally able and competent, Dr. Ome Nuguid. I'm certain they'll agree that apples all day will not keep doctors like them away!

Baby food tips:

- Introduce only one type of food a week and monitor for allergic reactions. Only after this can you begin to mix and blend ingredients.
- Omit sugar, salt, strong seasonings.
- Use the freshest ingredients. I think organic is best.
- Choose food with the highest concentration of vitamins and minerals. Include greens, vegetables, fruits and tender, lean cuts of meat.
- Wash fruits and vegetables thoroughly.
- Steam, instead of boil, to preserve as much nutrients as possible.
- Purée or mash baby food evenly and well.
- Don't serve undercooked meat or raw vegetables.
- I don't recommend freezing or keeping batches of baby food in the chiller. Make small quantities at a time. Prepare a new batch before each meal, if possible. Throw away leftover.
- Don't give babies below 1 year old honey, spinach, egg whites or fruits with high acid content (oranges, pineapples).
- For fresh fruit purées, use any fruit desired. Soft fruits like bananas could be directly puréed, while hard ones are best baked or steamed first.

Complete baby meal

Purée 1/3 cup flaked cooked chicken or beef (boiled and flaked) with 1/4 cup cooked white or brown rice and 1/2 cup of vegetables (carrots, beans, squash, broccoli, snow peas, asparagus, zucchini, etc.). Add stock or water to thin the mixture, depending on the desired consistency.

Applesauce: Quarter two apples. Remove pits. Bake in 350°F oven until soft. Remove skin and purée.

For questions or suggestions, text 0917-8399888.

Learn all about 'lumpia'

THE REGGIE Aspiras School of Culinary Arts' schedule of classes for Oct. 8-13 follows:

Oct. 8—Crunchy Spring Rolls (all new). From authentic *Lumpia* and Asian Spring Rolls: Pinoy-style *Lumpia*, Thai, Vietnamese, Singaporean, to gourmet—seafood, duck, lobster, curry; side dishes

Oct. 9—Salt (all new). Salt Roasted Prawns, Salt Cured Whole Fried Turkey, Salt Crust Roast Mushroom Chicken, Salt Crust Roast Beef, Salt Crust Salmon; sauces, side dishes and condiments

Oct. 11—The Ultimate Crepe Workshop (all new). Savory, herbed, chocolate and dessert crepe recipes; filling—mushroom, ham, cheese, seafood, chicken and other savory variations; dessert crepe buffet (mixed fruit, creams and sauces); Crepe Suzette and Crepe Samurai

Oct. 13—Sinfully Delicious Desserts (all new). Green Tea Tiramisu, Green Tea Cheesecake, Tofu Cheesecake, Creme Brulée Egg Tarts, White Chocolate and Caramel Banana Cream Pie, Vanilla Bean Crepe Samurai, Apple Pie with Hazel Walnut Streusel, Butterscotch Sauce and Homemade Vanilla Ice Cream

Call 9289296, 9273008, 6335162, 6474744 or 0917-8399888.